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"Gardens are never done."

Molly Sedlacek, designer and resident

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Finding the Center

An architect weaves together inside and out in a Buenos Aires renovation.

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Familiar Footing

Sustainable materials bring an easy warmth to a Los Angeles home.

TEXT
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PHOTOS
Chantal Anderson

COVER
Luisa Landolfo runs through her family's home in Buenos Aires.
PHOTO BY Javier Agustín Rojas

ABOVE
Molly Sedlacek's Los Angeles home creates a moment of peace in the center of the city.
PHOTO BY Chantal Anderson

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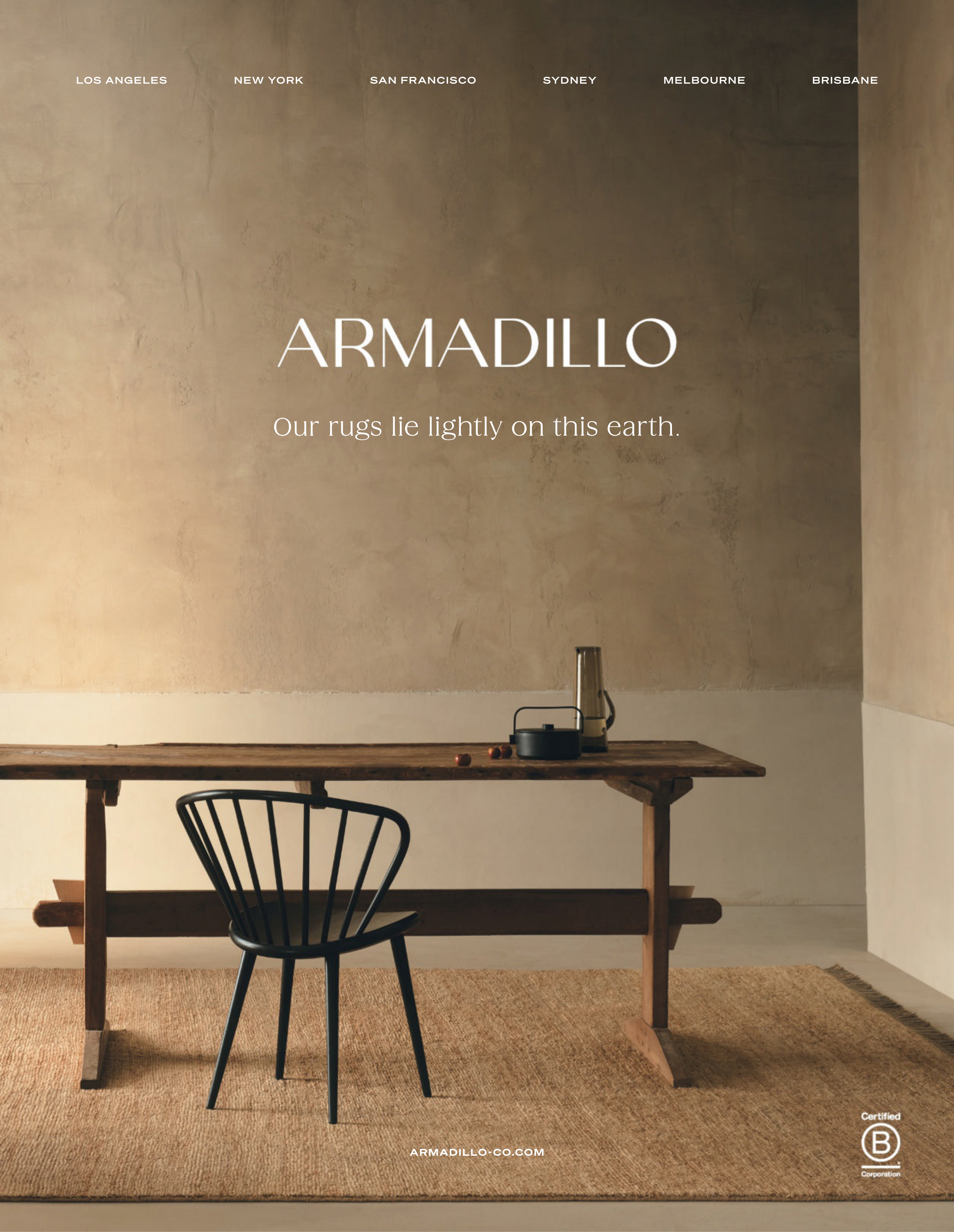
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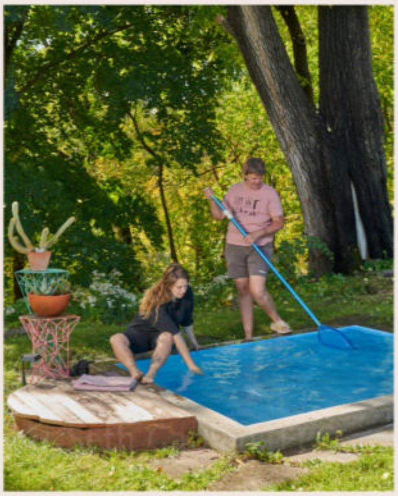

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TEXT BY Alana Hope Levinson

106 Pools
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TEXT BY Molly Osberg
PHOTOS BY Seth Caplan and Mark Khan

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Urban Gardeners

You can put in a pool no matter where you live—if you're determined. At least, that's how the undaunted bathers in this issue see it. They don't let barriers like, say, not actually owning property stand in their way. And their tales of aquatic triumph (p. 99) sum up an issue dedicated to outdoor living spaces that carve a bit of nature out of cities and towns.

Some of these stories are adventures. In our Modern World section (p. 31), we follow three excursions that range from urban hikes to nude picnics (all of which our editors have at one point undertaken) and match the gear you might need for such a trip with furnishings that will bring the spirit of the journey to your backyard. We also visit a home in Buenos Aires (p. 80) that combines two buildings with a few narrow slits of roughly sliced concrete to create a labyrinth-like circuit of green spaces threading together a single house and begging to be explored.

Others are about living with and in nature. A trio of townhouses (p. 56) provide an escape from the city—without turning their backs on it—while in Los Angeles, a landscape designer finds a kindred spirit in a developer who built a house (p. 88) that proved the economics of using natural, mostly local materials. The result is a cork-clad home set in a secret garden of sorts that shows how an investment in ecology can compete in even the wildest real estate markets.

Finally, there's a story about a landscape at the center of righting wrongs, acknowledging tragedy, and supporting your neighbors. The Wiyot Tribe has been working for decades to consolidate ancestral lands in California that were brutally seized during European colonization. And in the midst of an affordable-housing crisis, tribal leaders have also established a land trust to ensure that they can provide their community with enduring homes and much needed green space. Their story (p. 70) is a specific effort, but it demonstrates a tactic for other communities struggling with affordability.

The landscapes, large and small, in this issue are born of their cities, communities, and ecologies. And whether you have access to a few wild acres, a nearby park, or a renegade pool, I hope these places serve as examples of how you can cultivate a patch of green that benefits the people around you. ■

William Hanley, *Editor-in-Chief*
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PHOTO: BRIAN W. FERRY

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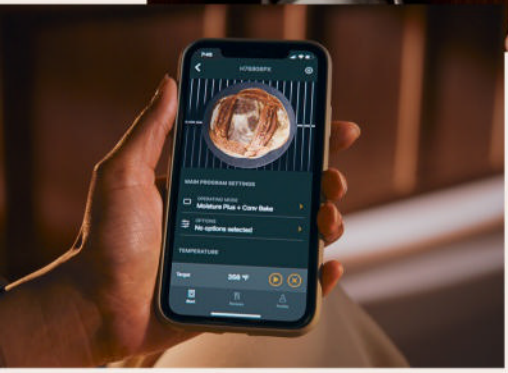

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contributors

Alana Hope Levinson

Writer

“The Poolside Life—on Loan,” p. 99

It snowed in Los Angeles the day that Alana Hope Levinson was supposed to visit a pool for a dip for this issue’s story about Swimply, an online platform used by homeowners to rent out their pools. The impact of weather extremes due to global warming, the racist past of public pools, and the status symbol of hanging poolside today are just a few things explored by Levinson, whose work examines cultural phenomena from multiple angles. She rescheduled the swim, but it was still cold when she went: “I paid an extra twenty-five dollars to get access to the hot tub,” says Levinson. “It was as close to the feeling of owning a pool as you can get, but without, you know, the financial nightmare.”

John Trujillo

Dwell Editorial Fellow

“I got my master’s in architecture, but the thing about it was that I didn’t really get to design any houses. All my projects were very large-scale,” says John Trujillo. As Dwell’s editorial fellow, Trujillo is becoming reacquainted with the residential side of design, whether conducting interviews for stories, writing roundups, finding homes to feature, or brainstorming themes for Modern World. For this issue’s Houses We Love section, Trujillo looked at hundreds of reader submissions to help compile a selection of apartments. “I don’t mind the tedium at all, because of the inspiration,” he says. “You think an apartment is relatively straightforward, but in reality, the things people do with them are pretty far out.”

Kalen Goodluck

Photographer and Writer

“Building Back,” p. 70

Kalen Goodluck, a member of the Three Affiliated Tribes, is an Albuquerque, New Mexico–based investigative journalist and photographer focusing on Indigenous affairs. “Bringing history into these stories is really important, especially for tribal nations, to really understand the contemporary issues,” he says. “When you hear about tribes getting their lands back, it can feel really abstract.” For that reason, Goodluck traveled to Eureka, California, for a feature on the Wiyot Tribe’s land-back initiative there, going on ride-alongs with initiative leaders to see the land up close, conduct interviews, and take pictures, all of which required balancing historical research with a different approach. “It’s improvising a bit,” he says. “But I think writing is just as improvisational.”

PHOTOS: CATIE LAFFOON (ALANA HOPE LEVINSON); TERESA TRUJILLO (JOHN TRUJILLO); KALEN GOODLUCK

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> “Incredible to see two people working so hard, for two damn years, to make something happen within their budget. Love the resourcefulness, creativity, and DIY approach. Inspiring.”
>
> **@brrkerr via Instagram**

Tired of renting, furniture designers Audi Culver and Ivy Siosi purchased a lot in Bloomington, Indiana, and built their studio/home [“Scaling Up,” March/April]. The couple’s expertise in woodworking meant they could do a lot themselves—for example, they bought, milled, and installed the cedar exterior—to keep the build within a $165,000 budget.

Re: “Scaling Up: The proprietors of an Indiana furniture company take on a bigger project—their own house.” *March/April*

Nothing but total admiration for all the fantastic design and work they put in, but $380 for kitchen cabinets?

@KEVINKOSTYK VIA INSTAGRAM

We used leftover plywood and free sassafras lumber. All we had to pay for were drawer slides and one more sheet of maple ply.

@SIOSIDESIGN VIA INSTAGRAM

I’m curious about the cistern. Why that rather than a well if municipal water isn’t available? I’m really only familiar with cisterns being used in very arid areas.

@ERICAWALKERJEWELRY VIA INSTAGRAM

The only drawback, in my opinion, is that excavation is really expensive. Our cistern is eight-feet deep. Oh, and if there is a drought, it can get a little scary! We have to be careful about water usage in August.

@SIOSIDESIGN VIA INSTAGRAM

Re: “The Tiny Home Hope: The creators of small-scale shelters have touted them as a solution for people in need of housing. But what is it like to actually live in one? We went to Oregon to find out.” *March/April*

When you think about it for a minute, what difference does a tiny shack make? It’s no different from living in a tent or a car. A tiny shack is still lack of housing. Why aren’t people building appropriate rental housing, with kitchens and bathrooms and bedrooms? All the knee-jerk reactions (such as tiny shacks) aren’t hiding the fact of the thousands who cannot find affordable housing.

SINCERELY,
RACHAEL AGNEW

Micro-shelters and similar models do not provide bathrooms or plumbing in these units. Until dignity is integrated in these units, they will just be charity boxes for humans. They deserve better.

@RAGAMICKIE VIA INSTAGRAM

Featured Collection

Greenified Urban Space

Readers are loving this online collection of urban gardens, which includes the courtyard of the Moriyama House, designed by Ryue Nishizawa. Its minimalist, freestanding rooms surround a private outdoor space in a suburban Tokyo community.

PHOTOS: LUCY HEWETT (“SCALING UP”); DEAN KAUFMAN (“GREENIFIED URBAN SPACE”)

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love it or hate it

Breeze-Blocks

Our editors are spying breeze-blocks all over new projects—even indoors. Are they clunky throwbacks or smart classics? Here's what our readers think.

Diffused light and a silhouetted pattern?? Ummm, yes, always!
@slowloris_jessica

Love them, but in NYC/New England they're less useful.
@redmhan

So out of style they are back in style!
@silversuedehead

Definitely not passé, foundational in Mexican architecture and design.
@moramistudio

And in Indian architecture—these walls are a tool to live with heat and fierce sun.
@ungranola

Love—structured texture that also allows light through.
@goldenrod.vintage

I adore them! Have a 1963 home with a breeze-block courtyard around the entryway (and pink tile in the bathroom).
@lupo_in_viaggio

I love them, dated or not. They are varied and capable of establishing a wonderful mood in a private space. They're brilliant, used correctly.
@momstix

Love breeze-blocks, especially midcentury modern ones as an ode to my beloved town of Palm Springs. I wish regular home-supply stores carried them.
@papish_malibu

READER POLL

82% Love

18% Hate

Not always practical in northern climates, but beautiful and practical in warm places.
@meglena_art_plant

Love them. They add texture, dimension, and interest to any space.
@patrickredinger

They remind me of an updated version of retro X blocks from the 1940s & '50s.
@tambrozia

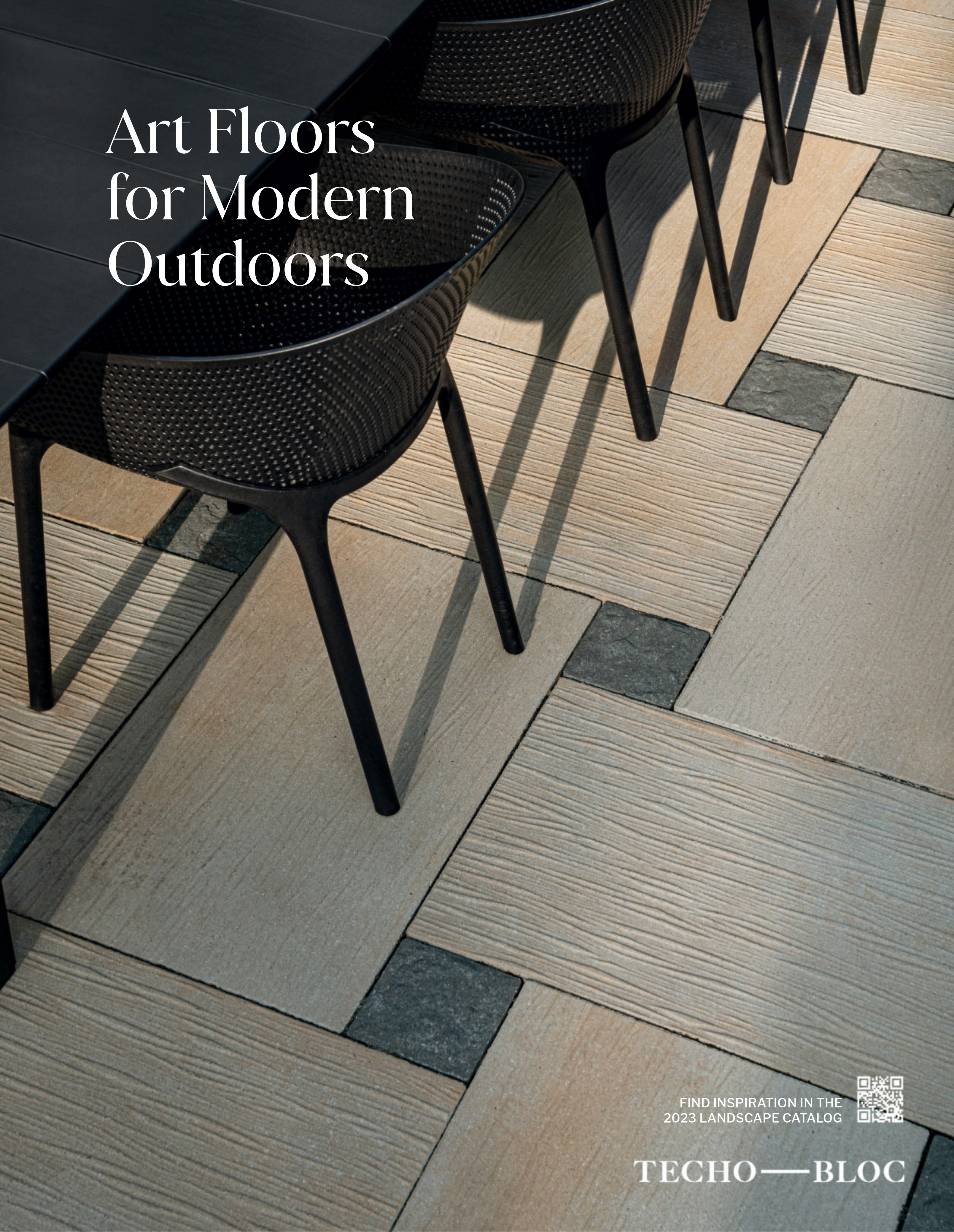
Love!! They've been a staple in Asian countries. Glad to see them finally getting the attention they deserve.
@penpen_in_the_city

LOVE them. The geometry, the order, the materials.... Love it all.
@lisahourin

Love taking the detail indoor using different textures, construction materials, and colors.
@janneiges

So reminiscent of local mud-based architectural walls between courtyards in Indian villages around the Aravallis—great utility!
@tarabaswani

ILLUSTRATION: PETER OUMANSKI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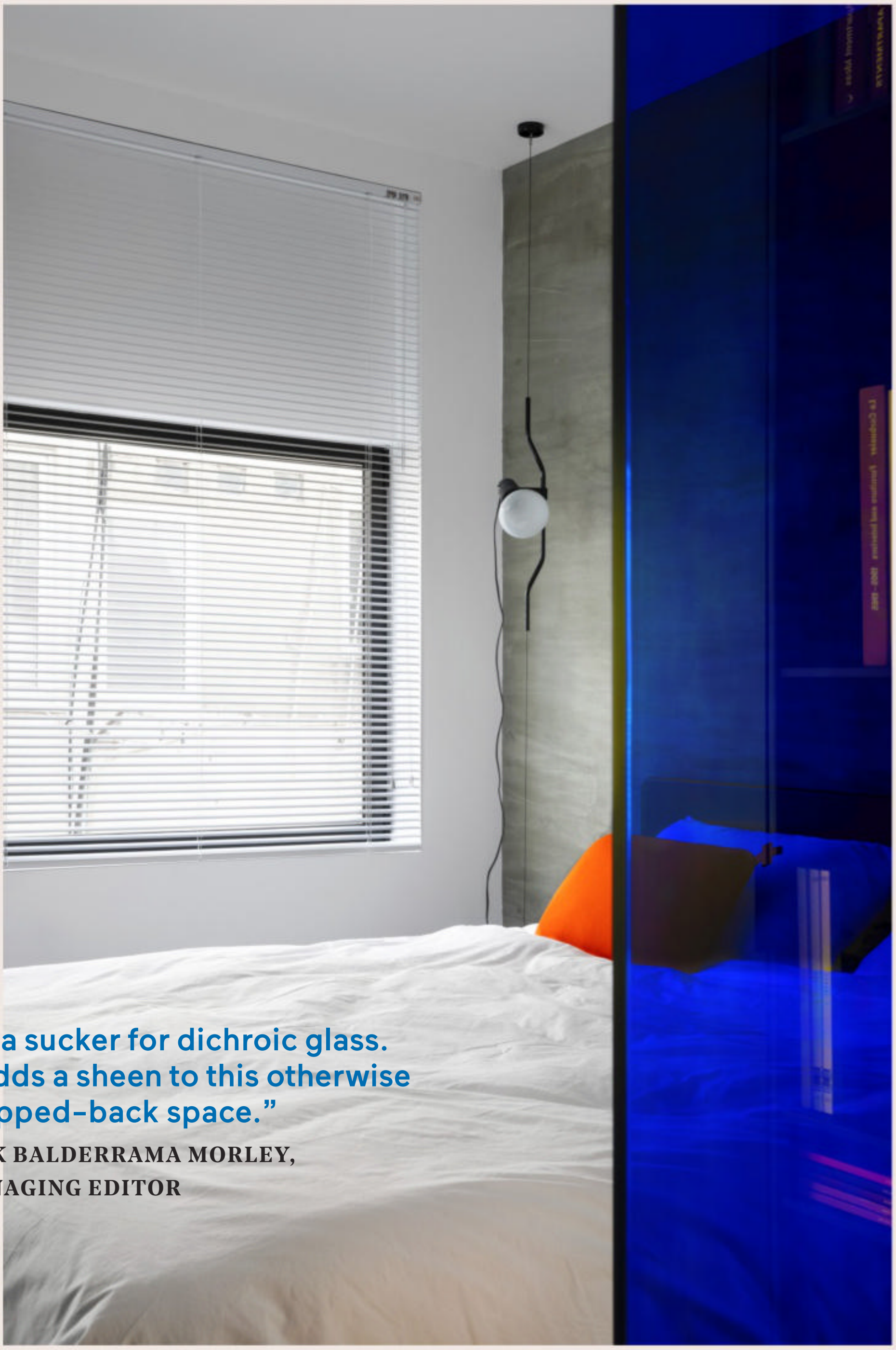
Here, our staffers pick some of their favorite city apartment renovations that architects and designers have uploaded to Dwell.com.



> “I’m a sucker for dichroic glass. It adds a sheen to this otherwise stripped-back space.”
>
> **JACK BALDERRAMA MORLEY, MANAGING EDITOR**

Dichroic Cube

by Yael Perry

“The process was festive,” says interior designer Yael Perry of renovating her 485-square-foot apartment in the Old North neighborhood of Tel Aviv. “I used my favorite materials.” After removing the unit’s interior partitions, the designer split the floor plan in half with floor-to-ceiling millwork that holds home systems and storage. The custom cabinetry “was dyed black to create a focal point in the space and match the monochromatic palette,” says Perry. Nearly 10-foot-tall panels of dichroic glass—a material she’d been keen to use for years—further separate the bedroom from the adjacent kitchen and bathroom. “Sunlight shines through the dichroic glass to create a multitude of shades and beautiful geometric shapes on the floor, walls, and ceiling,” she says. “At night, the lighting fixtures illuminate the spaces, and other shades come out of the glass.”

More at Dwell.com

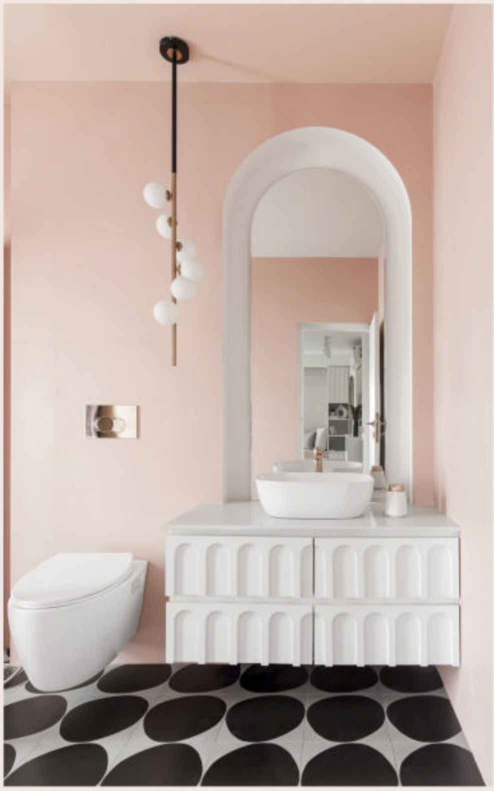
Do you have a project you’d like to see published in Houses We Love? Share it at dwell.com/addhome.

PHOTOS: ITAY BENIT (DICHROIC CUBE); DESIGN DOODLE STUDIO (HOUSE OF 91 ARCHES); UTKU PEKLI (HOTEL DES MONNAIES)

House of 91 Arches

by Design Doodle Studio

When the duo behind Design Doodle Studio revived a 1,500-square-foot apartment in New Delhi's Dwarka neighborhood for a young couple, one of their goals was to improve natural light and air circulation through the cramped unit by removing its clutter of partitions and awkwardly placed structural elements. Though the original archway was intended to hide obstructions with its rounded edges, the team found that the motif "ended up being the very soul of our design," says cofounder Maha Khan. She and her partner, Vijay Kumar, extended the motif throughout the fifth-floor unit, from the doorways and windows to the furniture and fixtures. Curved edges pair with peachy tones to reflect what the designers call "a young, playful vibe."

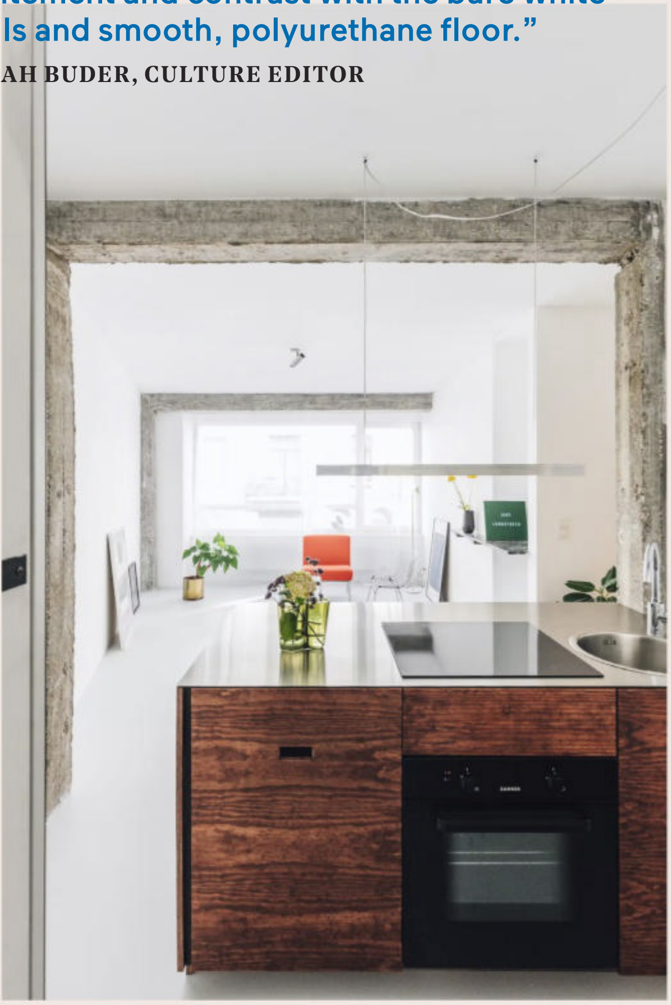


"I love how this New Delhi apartment isn't afraid of color, ceilings and all. The designers' restraint, however, allows them to play with patterns in a fun way while still creating a calming feeling."

SUZANNE LAGASA, CREATIVE DIRECTOR

"The way the architects let the bones of the existing structure inform the updated layout drew me in immediately. The rough concrete beams and wood details also add visual excitement and contrast with the bare white walls and smooth, polyurethane floor."

SARAH BUDER, CULTURE EDITOR



Hotel des Monnaies

by CO-DE

Architect Beatrice Colaiacomo of Brussels firm CO-DE transformed a 430-square-foot apartment in the city's Saint-Gilles neighborhood into an attractive but low-maintenance rental: a priority for a young client on a modest budget. After stripping back layers of plaster to reveal four pairs of concrete columns and beams dividing the flat in three, the firm placed the kitchen at the center of the layout between a wooden workstation and an aluminum partition concealing storage, appliances, and a corridor to the rear of the apartment. "The wall clearly separates the living spaces from the more intimate spaces of the bedroom and the bathroom," says Colaiacomo. Various finishes and objects—mirrors, curtains, lighting fixtures—were bought secondhand at the Salvation Army or through Facebook Marketplace.

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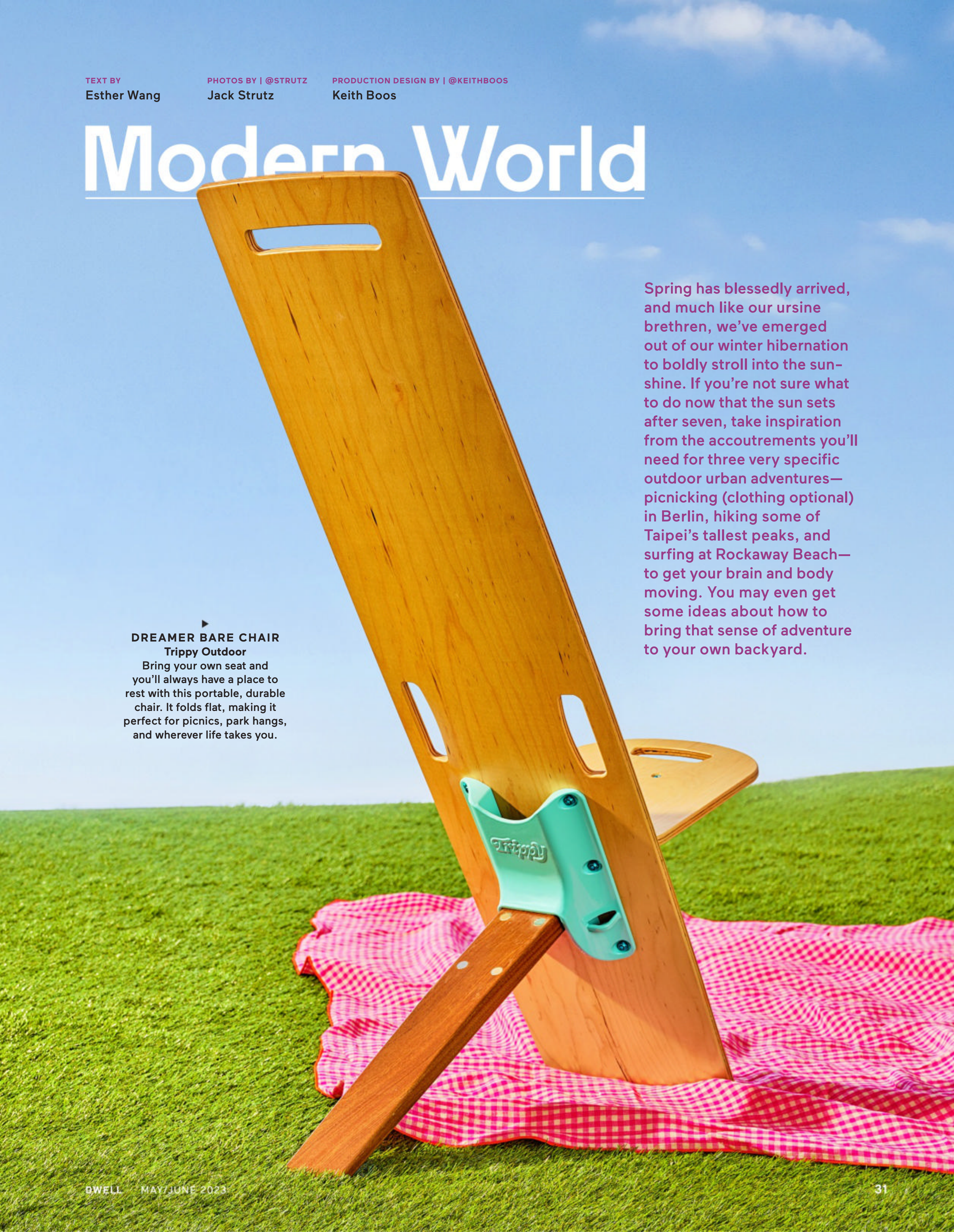
Modern World

Spring has blessedly arrived, and much like our ursine brethren, we've emerged out of our winter hibernation to boldly stroll into the sunshine. If you're not sure what to do now that the sun sets after seven, take inspiration from the accoutrements you'll need for three very specific outdoor urban adventures—picnicking (clothing optional) in Berlin, hiking some of Taipei's tallest peaks, and surfing at Rockaway Beach—to get your brain and body moving. You may even get some ideas about how to bring that sense of adventure to your own backyard.



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Trippy Outdoor
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Get Naked in Berlin

Berlin may be known for its rollicking nightlife, but for the next time you find yourself in the German capital, we suggest another traditional activity—flinging off your clothes and embracing the lifestyle of *Freikörperkultur*, or free body culture, aka nudism, and commonly shortened to FKK.

At many of Berlin's lakes and parks, it is rare to *not* see someone nude enjoying the sun and avoiding any tan lines whatsoever. "Germans love to be naked," says Gabriele Mercatali, project manager for an electronic music platform and longtime local. "Even the parks in Berlin have nudist areas. It's like if you went to Central Park in New York, and you saw a huge nudist area."

There's a long and fascinating history of German nudism, which dates to the late 1800s and which became firmly entrenched in the culture of East Germany. While some bemoan that FKK is dying out these days, people are still clamoring for their right to be unclothed. Earlier this year, after a woman complained that she was forced to cover up at one of the city's swimming pools, Berlin authorities announced that everyone could go topless in them.

For people new to FKK, Mercatali recommends a trip to Teufelssee, a small glacial lake surrounded by forest that's a short trip from central Berlin via car, bike, or public transit. While it can get crowded, he notes, its proximity to the city center, as well as its natural beauty and welcoming, mixed crowd, makes a trip there worth it. "It's cute because it's very queer, and [there are] also a lot of families," Mercatali says. Plus, he adds, "If you walk 15 minutes, there is a whole naked area inside the woods just for sunbathing." (Be mindful of the wild boars snuffling around for a snack.) And if you're wanting a quick dip after a night out, Teufelssee is "where everybody goes after the club."

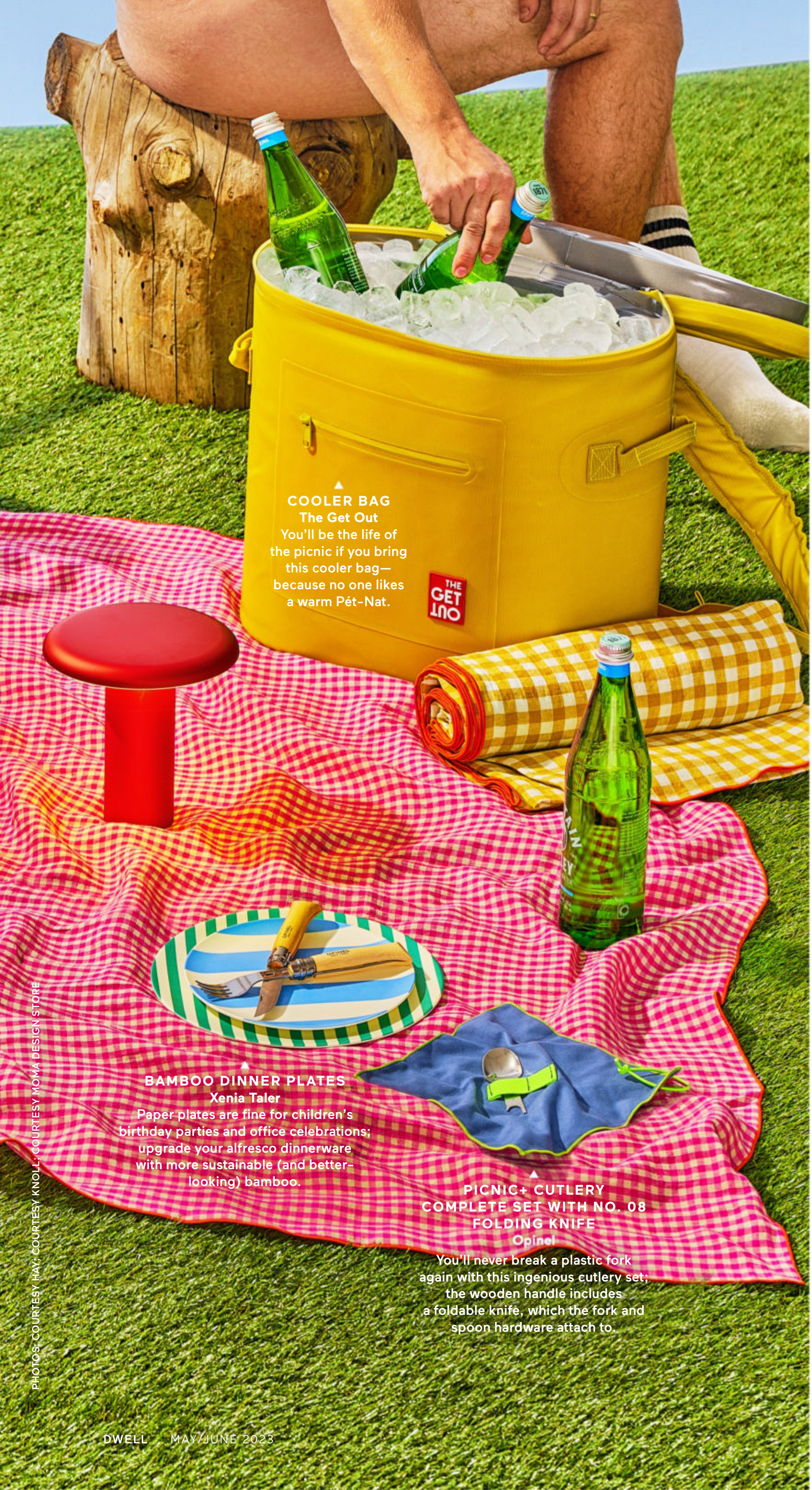
While you won't need a bathing suit on a trip to any of Berlin's many lakes, be sure to bring plenty of sunscreen, a hat with a wide brim, a good book, and any other sundries you might need for a day out re-creating Manet's *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*.

"Everybody minds their own business," Mercatali notes. "There is no sexual tension in these places. It's really the pleasure of being free."

PICNIC TABLECLOTH
Madre Linen
A cheery linen tablecloth in nostalgic gingham doubles as a picnic blanket for your nudist (or clothed) adventures.

TAKKU
Artemide
Why pack it up when night falls? This chargeable lamp casts a pleasant glow over the proceedings at hand and comes in six vibrant colors.

LEISURE TABLE
Ita
Eating off your lap is trickier if there's not much between your potato salad and your unmentionables. This table should help.



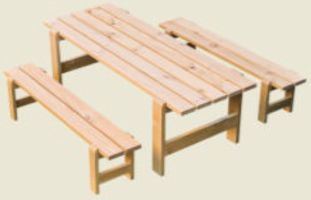
COOLER BAG
The Get Out
You'll be the life of the picnic if you bring this cooler bag—because no one likes a warm Pét-Nat.

BAMBOO DINNER PLATES
Xenia Taler
Paper plates are fine for children's birthday parties and office celebrations; upgrade your alfresco dinnerware with more sustainable (and better-looking) bamboo.

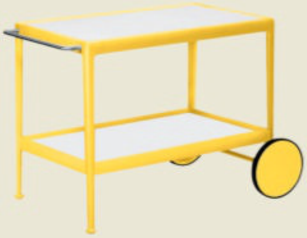
PICNIC+ CUTLERY COMPLETE SET WITH NO. 08 FOLDING KNIFE
Opinel
You'll never break a plastic fork again with this ingenious cutlery set; the wooden handle includes a foldable knife, which the fork and spoon hardware attach to.

PHOTOS: COURTESY HAY; COURTESY KNOLL; COURTESY MOMA DESIGN STORE

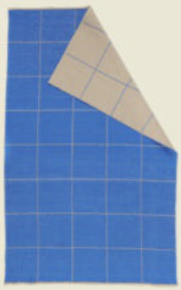
GET THE LOOK AT HOME



WEEKDAY TABLE & BENCH
Hannes & Fritz for Hay
This table exudes picnic vibes without making your backyard feel like a nursery school—a win for everyone involved.



1966 COLLECTION PORCELAIN SERVING CART
Richard Schultz for Knoll
A classic design in a sunny yellow is the perfect accessory for your backyard cocktail hours.



RUTH REVERSIBLE INDOOR/OUTDOOR RUG
MoMA Design Store
Cover up concrete or otherwise untoward surfaces with a woven plastic rug.

Hike Some Gorgeous Mountains in Taipei

Where can you hike a mountain in the morning, soak in a hot spring in the afternoon, and then hit up a night market in the evening for some of the best food you've ever tasted?

Why, Taipei, naturally. Taiwan's capital, surrounded as it is by hills and mountains, is an overlooked paradise for hikers and lovers of the outdoors. "Over 60 percent of the island is forested, so we have tons of hiking trails and high-altitude mountains, and Taipei has a lot of small hiking trails in and around the city," says Clarissa Wei, a Taiwanese-American journalist living in Taipei and the author of the soon-to-be-published cookbook *Made in Taiwan*. "It's just a lovely place to meander and get lost." As Ami Barnes, who helms the popular hiking blog Taiwan Trails and Tales with her wife, puts it, "The hiking scene here deserves more recognition than it gets."

In fact, there are so many hiking trails within easy reach of both Taipei and New Taipei City via public transportation that it's hard to recommend just a handful. If you have access to a car, you have even more options.

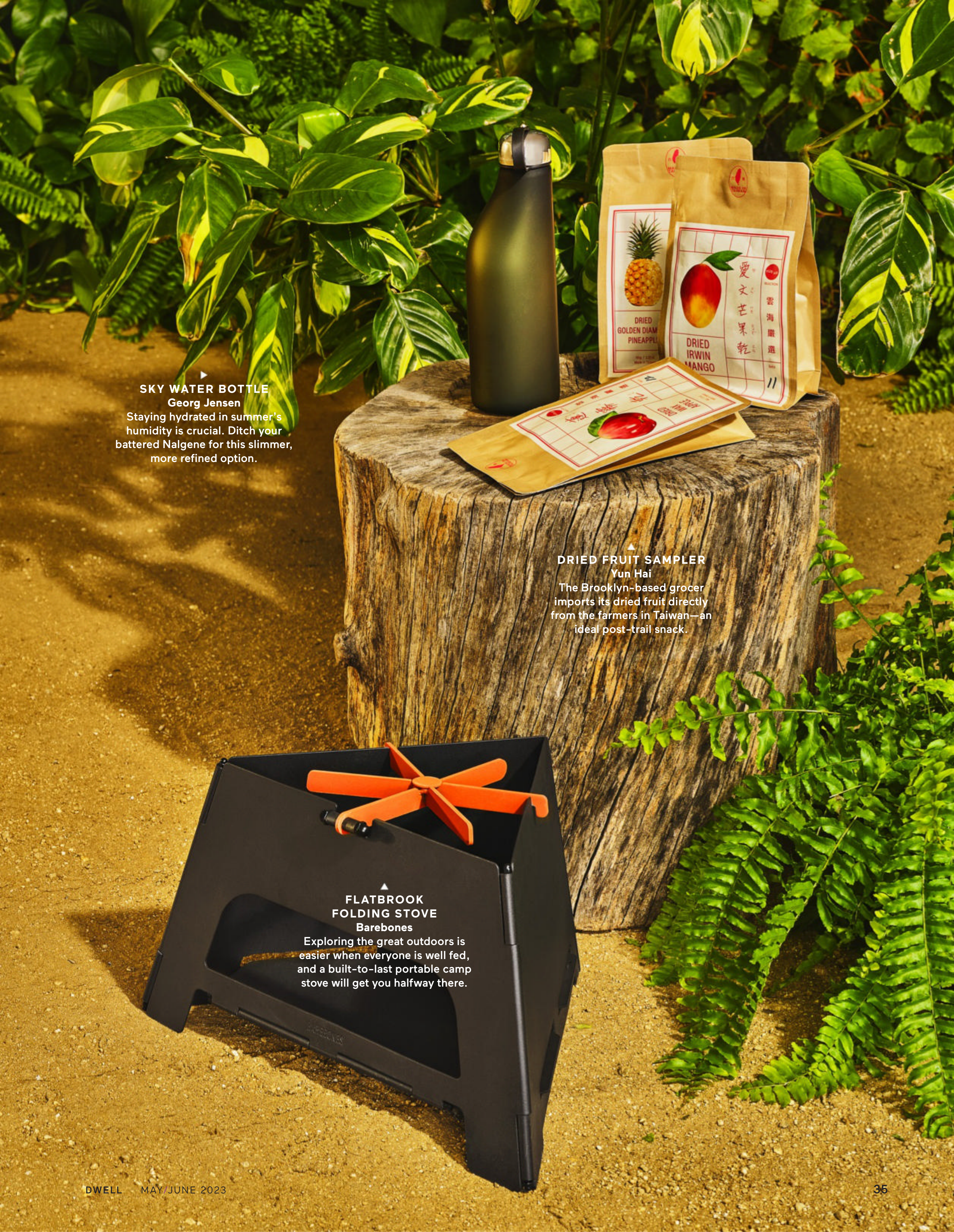
Do you want iconic views of Taipei 101, the city's most famous skyscraper, without even leaving the city? Wei recommends you visit the Xiangshan, or "Elephant Mountain," Trail. "Elephant Mountain is one that every first-timer to Taipei should check out," she says, though its popularity may mean that you'll be joined by crowds of people eager for the same view. (Same goes for the Jinmianshan Trail, which boasts equally stunning views.)

For more adventurous hikers, Barnes suggests the Huangdidian Trail, which includes a ridge walk (and a bat cave), and the Wuliaojian Hike, another ridge walk. "Each time I do either of these, I'm overwhelmed by just how fun they are," Barnes says. For both, in addition to the usual gear, you may want to bring gloves, since there are sections with ropes, as well as a rain jacket.

And both Wei and Barnes say hikers should spend some time in Yangmingshan National Park, a nature preserve on the northern edge of Taipei with a variety of trails. "I'm a big fan of Qixing Mountain in the park, because it's a bit off the beaten path but also offers a unique vantage point of the city, and you can see dramatic fumaroles," Wei says. Barnes visits the park for a more relaxing experience. "I'll head to the irrigation canal trails in the southeastern corner of Yangmingshan National Park—for example, Dengfeng Canal Trail or Pingding Canal Trail," she says. "These two are great for seeing cicadas and all sorts of wildlife in the summer."

Camping options near Taipei are more limited, but if you want to spend a night or two outdoors, check out the historic Tamsui-Kavalan Trails, which start in New Taipei City and head east to the coast. "The middle route in particular lends itself to camping," Barnes says. "There are several managed but basic campsites along the route that you can stop at, and the final destination is the black sand beach at Wai'ao. There are even a few spots where it would be possible to wild camp along this route."

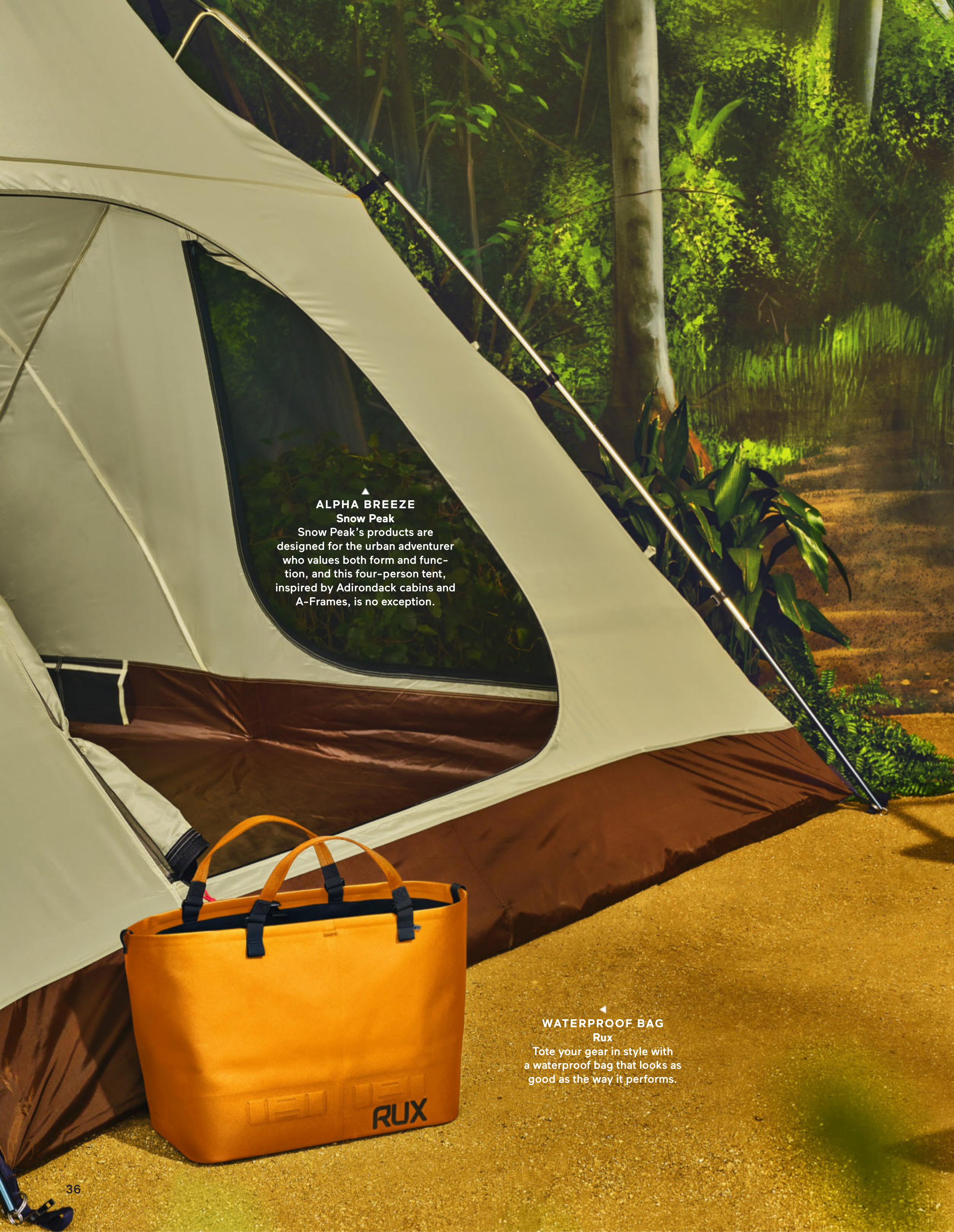
And consider a night hike, says Wei: "I love hiking around Bitan Mountain at night during firefly season and seeing the forest blanketed in glittery, ephemeral lights."



SKY WATER BOTTLE
Georg Jensen
Staying hydrated in summer's humidity is crucial. Ditch your battered Nalgene for this slimmer, more refined option.

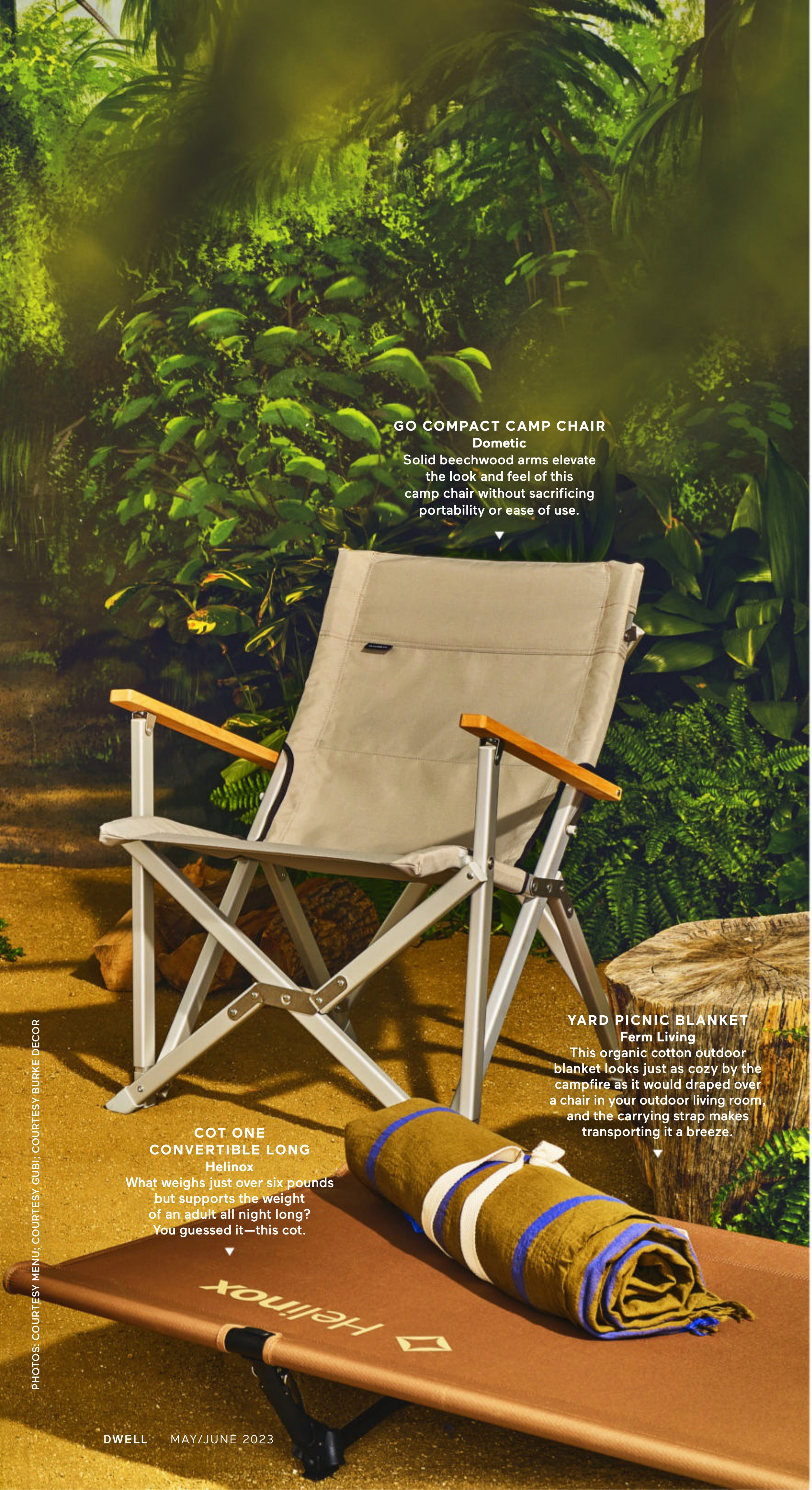
DRIED FRUIT SAMPLER
Yun Hai
The Brooklyn-based grocer imports its dried fruit directly from the farmers in Taiwan—an ideal post-trail snack.

FLATBROOK FOLDING STOVE
Barebones
Exploring the great outdoors is easier when everyone is well fed, and a built-to-last portable camp stove will get you halfway there.



ALPHA BREEZE
Snow Peak
Snow Peak's products are designed for the urban adventurer who values both form and function, and this four-person tent, inspired by Adirondack cabins and A-Frames, is no exception.

WATERPROOF BAG
Rux
Tote your gear in style with a waterproof bag that looks as good as the way it performs.



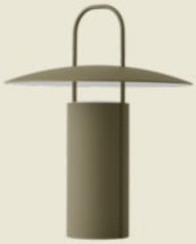
GO COMPACT CAMP CHAIR
Dometic
Solid beechwood arms elevate the look and feel of this camp chair without sacrificing portability or ease of use.

YARD PICNIC BLANKET
Ferm Living
This organic cotton outdoor blanket looks just as cozy by the campfire as it would draped over a chair in your outdoor living room, and the carrying strap makes transporting it a breeze.

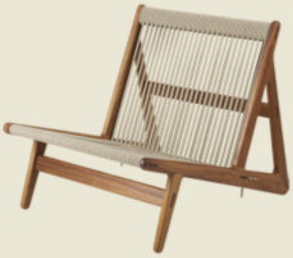
COT ONE CONVERTIBLE LONG
Helinox
What weighs just over six pounds but supports the weight of an adult all night long? You guessed it—this cot.

PHOTOS: COURTESY MENU; COURTESY GUBI; COURTESY BURKE DECOR

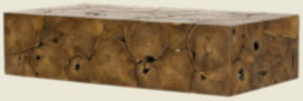
GET THE LOOK AT HOME



RAY TABLE LAMP
Menu
Unlike the old mining lamps that inspired its silhouette, this portable table lamp is chargeable and dimmable, and it includes an energy-saving LED bulb.



MR01 INITIAL LOUNGE CHAIR OUTDOOR
Mathias Steen Rasmussen for Gubi
Natural materials like iroko wood and linen rope make Gubi's outdoor chair, designed in collaboration with woodworker Mathias Steen Rasmussen, blend seamlessly into the surrounding nature.



TOMLIN OUTDOOR COFFEE TABLE
BD Studio
You could get lost in the mesmerizing texture of this root table made from responsibly sourced laminated teak.

The New York City surfing scene has exploded in recent years—go to the Rockaways on a summer day and you'll likely see dozens of boards bobbing up and down in the waves. The appeal is obvious. "Let's say you and I surf today. And then in 45 minutes, we could be in the city and go see a Broadway show. You can't do that in Montauk," says Lou Harris, the 51-year-old founder of the city's Black Surfing Association (BSA).

While summer tends to be the time of year when the waters are packed with the most surfers, true fans know that summertime surfing is merely preparation for the winter, the best season to lug your board onto the A train and head out to Queens. For one, the waves are better in the colder months. "In the winter, the ocean is generally stronger than in the summer, so you're getting some of the big waves," Rockaways regular Mohit Chhabra tells me. Chhabra began surfing in the cold waters of the Pacific Northwest but now lives in Brooklyn and heads to the Rockaways at least once a week during the winter.

And unlike during the summer, when the beach is filled with sunbathers, there are often days when he's one of the few people out on the sand, let alone in the water. "You get a better feeling of just being away in isolation," Chhabra says. "Certain winter days, you'd be hard-pressed to find ten people out on one of the beaches of the Rockaways."

While the BSA's Harris rarely takes his surfboard out in the depths of winter anymore, he has advice for those who are willing to brave the cold. The first tip—be prepared for the cold water to get in your wet suit. (You're going to get cold. Accept it. What is life but equal parts suffering and joy?) "You got the water coming inside. It's trickling down the back of your wet suit. It's freezing. You get the ice cream headache," Harris says, adding, "The first thing that freezes are your feet." The second tip? Pee inside your wet suit. "The pee makes your wet suit warm." He adds, only half-jokingly, "That's why I always tell people, 'Don't rent a wet suit—buy it. Because people have peed in there numerous times.' "

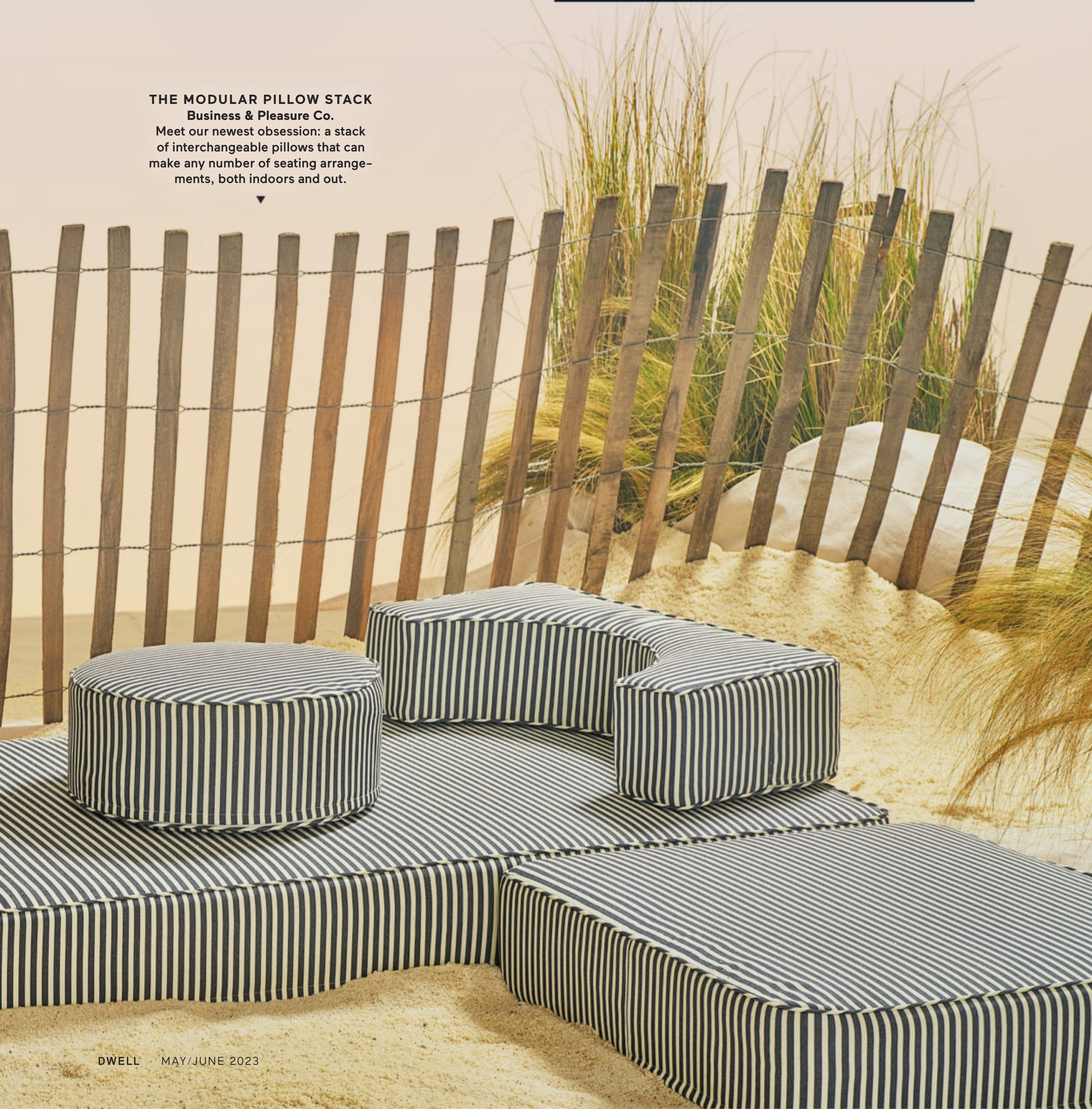
Chhabra recommends a shorter board, but only for experienced winter surfers, and also investing in the right gear to stay warm. "I'd say for gear, get a good 5/4 wet suit. Get some thick gloves at least," he tells me. (And don't forget some booties.)

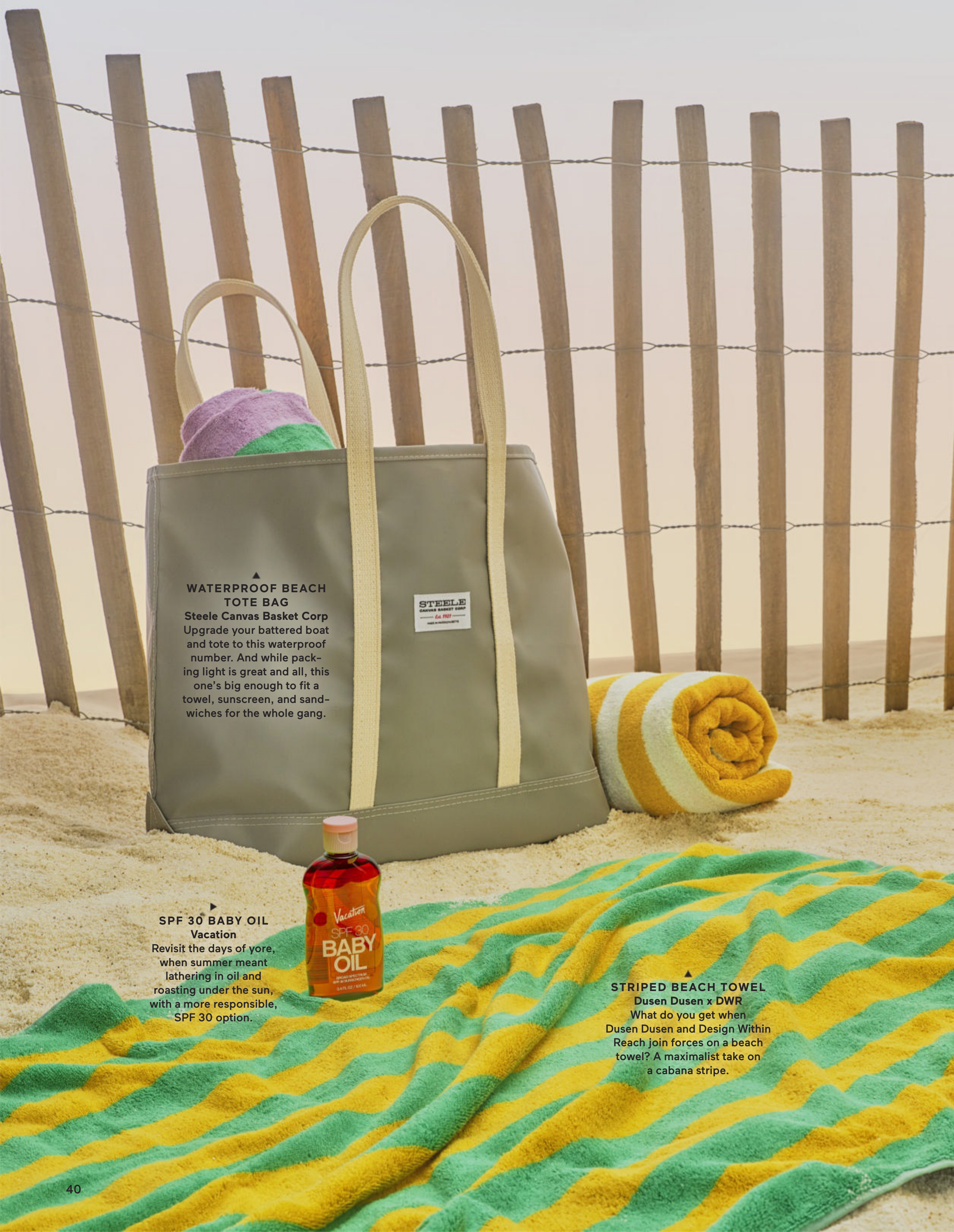
But braving the cold is worth it, he says. He recalls a winter's day earlier this year: "After an hour of being there and riding some waves, I forgot everything that I was stressed out about. When the waves are strong, like in the winter, you have to learn to work with them and flow with them and not fight with them. And I kind of like the metaphor that it is for just going through life."

▲
INKOSI LONGBOARD
Mami Wata
The graphics on Mami Wata's surf boards are a nod to modernism while also celebrating classic African motifs. And if riding waves isn't your thing, the boards make for striking wall art, too.

Surf Year-Round in New York City

THE MODULAR PILLOW STACK
Business & Pleasure Co.
Meet our newest obsession: a stack of interchangeable pillows that can make any number of seating arrangements, both indoors and out.
▼



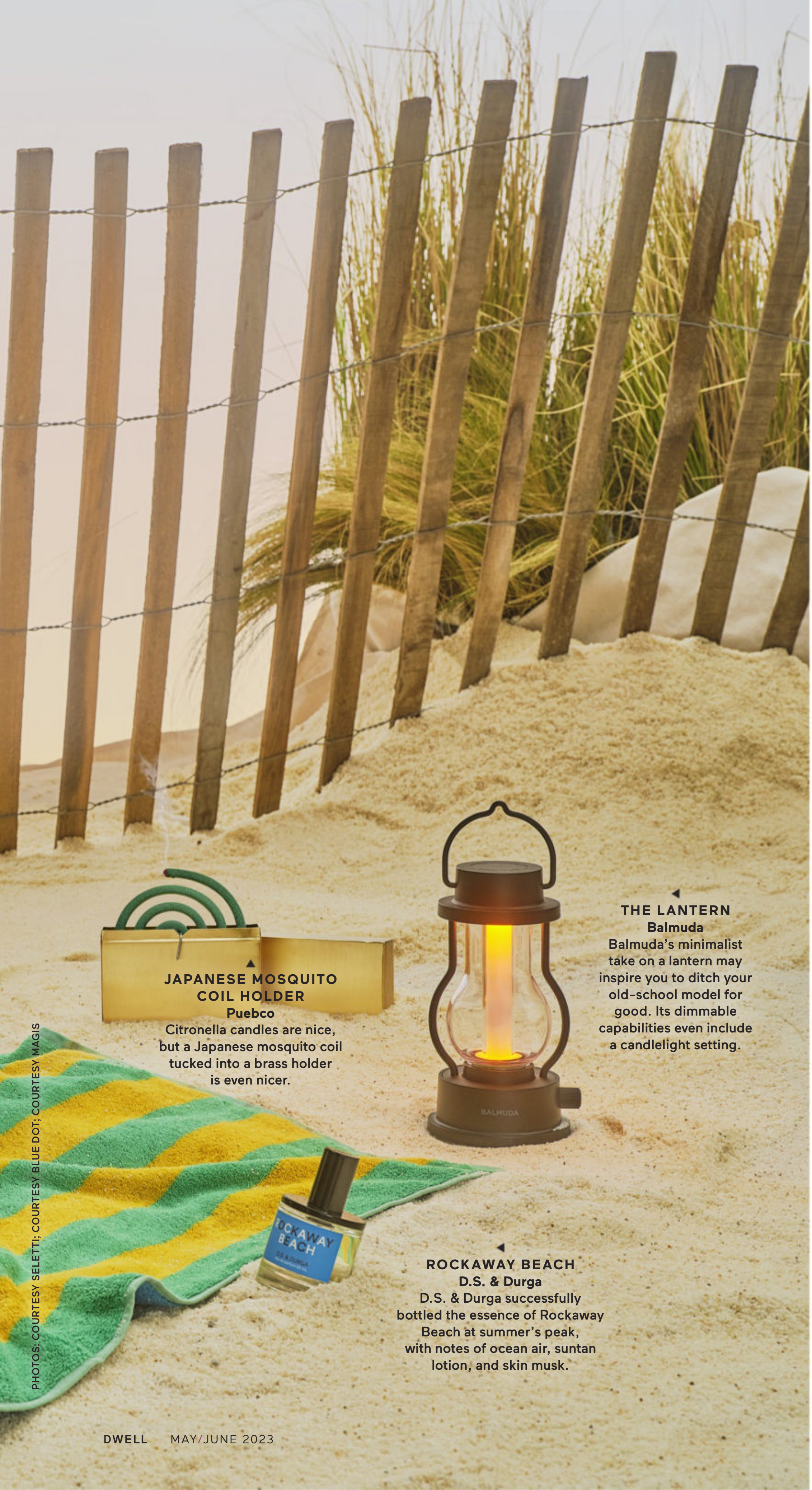


WATERPROOF BEACH TOTE BAG
Steele Canvas Basket Corp
Upgrade your battered boat and tote to this waterproof number. And while packing light is great and all, this one's big enough to fit a towel, sunscreen, and sandwiches for the whole gang.

SPF 30 BABY OIL
Vacation
Revisit the days of yore, when summer meant lathering in oil and roasting under the sun, with a more responsible, SPF 30 option.

STRIPED BEACH TOWEL
Dusen Dusen x DWR
What do you get when Dusen Dusen and Design Within Reach join forces on a beach towel? A maximalist take on a cabana stripe.

GET THE LOOK AT HOME



JAPANESE MOSQUITO COIL HOLDER
Puebco
Citronella candles are nice, but a Japanese mosquito coil tucked into a brass holder is even nicer.

THE LANTERN
Balmuda
Balmuda's minimalist take on a lantern may inspire you to ditch your old-school model for good. Its dimmable capabilities even include a candlelight setting.

ROCKAWAY BEACH
D.S. & Durga
D.S. & Durga successfully bottled the essence of Rockaway Beach at summer's peak, with notes of ocean air, suntan lotion, and skin musk.

PHOTOS: COURTESY SELETTI; COURTESY BLUE DOT; COURTESY MAGIS

AQUART SHOWER WITH CONCRETE BASE
Seletti
Upgrade your outdoor shower with Seletti's elegant version in brass and concrete.

CIRCULA LOW SIDE TABLE
Blu Dot
Durable enough to withstand the elements but sophisticated enough to be used inside in the winter months, Blu Dot's powder-coated metal side table is exactly where we want to set down our sbagliato.

SAM SON LOW ARMCHAIR
Magis
Magis's cast-polyethylene chair is proof that outdoor furniture doesn't have to be boring. Plus, how fitting is this marine hue?

House of Healing Hearts

AS TOLD TO
Abby Carney

ILLUSTRATIONS BY | @OLGA.SHTONDA
Olga Shtonda

For more than a decade, actress-writer Joyce Storey and her late husband, Tony Award–winning lighting director Howell Binkley, kept an open-door policy at their Harlem brownstone, frequently hosting dancers, actors, and designers who were in town for theatrical projects in their spare downstairs bedroom. (Their unit spans three floors of the four-level building.) When the two major directors Binkley worked with throughout his career took professional breaks around 2012, the couple began subleasing their bottom floor to temporary tenants. After Storey's husband died of lung cancer in 2020, she decided to continue welcoming what she calls a "rotating cast of characters" (some of whose names have been changed for this story) into the home's unused rooms—some staying for weeks, others for years. Here, Storey explains how the unusual living arrangement originated and how sharing her home has expanded her world.

A longtime renter opened her New York apartment to the lovelorn and found a source of lasting friendships.

I moved into the brownstone 13 years ago; Howell found it through an internet search around 2006. Even at the West Village carriage house where he lived prior, there was always somebody on his couch. He was just that charismatic guy. Howell had an associate from San Diego who would come to work on Broadway and stay here for months at a time. At other times, it'd be one dancer after another in the downstairs suite. There were always people staying here.

When Howell had a lean patch in his schedule, I suggested we rent out the bottom-floor suite instead of giving away the space, as we'd done in the past. Howell and the original landlord had a handshake deal—"Just do what you've got to do and pay the rent." The landlord and his wife divorced, and she now owns the building. She's totally fine with me renting out rooms; we talked about what was and wasn't allowed. She just didn't want me to Airbnb it.

It started with friends of friends. We didn't want full-time renters, because we wanted to still be able to decorate and just have our space. It's a three-bedroom with two upstairs bedrooms and a bathroom, a parlor level with the main living areas and a backyard and deck, and a downstairs suite. This works well because there's a floor in between. We never asked for market value; people would pay about $600 to $1,100 per month, depending on what they could afford.

In 2013, I was working for a theatrical lighting company and shared an office with a girl whose fiancé dumped her. She was stuck. I was like, "You can move in here." After about eight months, she moved out, and about six months later, when her friend's wife left him, he stayed here for around a year. But a couple we met through mutual friends, Martina and Rafael, were kind of the first official tenants. She's from Germany, he's from Uruguay—they used to live in New York, then moved to Uruguay and would come back in the summers. They started staying with us downstairs. They would sometimes watch TV at night in the living room, especially when the World Cup was on, but they were respectful of our space. >

louis poulsen

(RE)DISCOVER

ICONS

PH ARTICHOKE, PH 3/2 TABLE & AJ FLOOR

And so it began. Most of the people who stayed here were in transition from a relationship, so I dubbed our place Hazel's House of Healing Hearts, named after our dog at the time, a Saint Bernard. She was like the celebrity of the neighborhood; she became a wonderful healing part of people's journeys. After my husband's Broadway shows picked up—he was the lighting designer for Lin-Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton*—it was good company for me when he was working on the road.

In 2016, a woman named Marta, the best friend of a dear friend from Bosnia, needed a place to stay. Marta, who is from Montenegro, worked on a cruise ship, and her fiancé on the ship fell in love with someone else, so she came here. Meanwhile, Martina and her husband split after 35 years of marriage. I'd been saving the downstairs room for them that summer, but she wrote and said, "Don't bother." About a month after Marta moved in, Martina changed her mind and said she wanted the room after all. Martina is like family, so we improvised, and she stayed in the upstairs office on a pull-out sofa bed. Martina would go to the German shops—oh, the smells in the house when she was cooking!—and Marta would go to Queens to a specialty Serbian place. They'd always say, "These ingredients are from back home." Howell adored both of them.

When Howell got sick, Martina was just such a support, you know, to have in the house. She would roll up her sleeves and just dig into whatever needed to get done. Marta told me about this temple in Montenegro that people believe to be healing. Her parents asked for a shirt of Howell's—it had to be something he wore a lot; it was his *Hamilton* one—and they went on a religious pilgrimage of sorts. They had it blessed by a priest and sent it back with some holy water. Howell continued to wear the shirt after that. I just thought that was the most caring, loving thing anybody could ever do.

I thought after Howell left this world, the rotating door would close, but what evolved was, it was great for me to have the company.

Four years ago, Marta moved into the fourth-floor unit, and in May of last year, her close friend Mia moved into our downstairs suite. I took Howell's office and made it my office slash spare bedroom. It's got a sitting area and even a proper bed these days. It's hard for me to share that upstairs space because that's my sanctuary. I'm an introvert who extroverts. But with the right people, it's been fine. Mia and I share groceries; it's a *mi casa, su casa* kind of thing. She brings home focaccia from the Italian restaurant where she works. We'll sit together and she has, like, a million spreads—guacamole, hummus. It's very sweet, because since Howell passed, I haven't cooked all that much.

There have been so many people who have come and gone through here who have become friends. I usually give them my advice, like "If you're having trouble with this job, why don't you quit? You can stay here as long as you want." It feels good to give back in that way. When it was somebody's birthday, we'd always celebrate. Everybody buys everybody little Christmas gifts. You know, it was never a rule. It just organically happened.

I also get to know these people who have had fascinating lives. I get the joy of that; you don't get so myopic about your own world. I have invitations to Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro and Germany and Uruguay. All these places, I know people. It's really kind of cool. ■

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TEXT BY
Meher Ahmad

The Future of Refugee Housing

A growing number of architects are designing for displaced people, provoking the question: Are the structures being built for them doing them justice?

With the December press release announcing a series of modular tents meant to be utilized as schools, clinics, and emergency shelters for displaced communities, Zaha Hadid Architects (ZHA) included a series of photos. In one, smiling, happy children are sitting at their desks underneath sloping, windsail-like arches, the distinctly modern combination of aluminum frame and taut, white "tent" fabric.

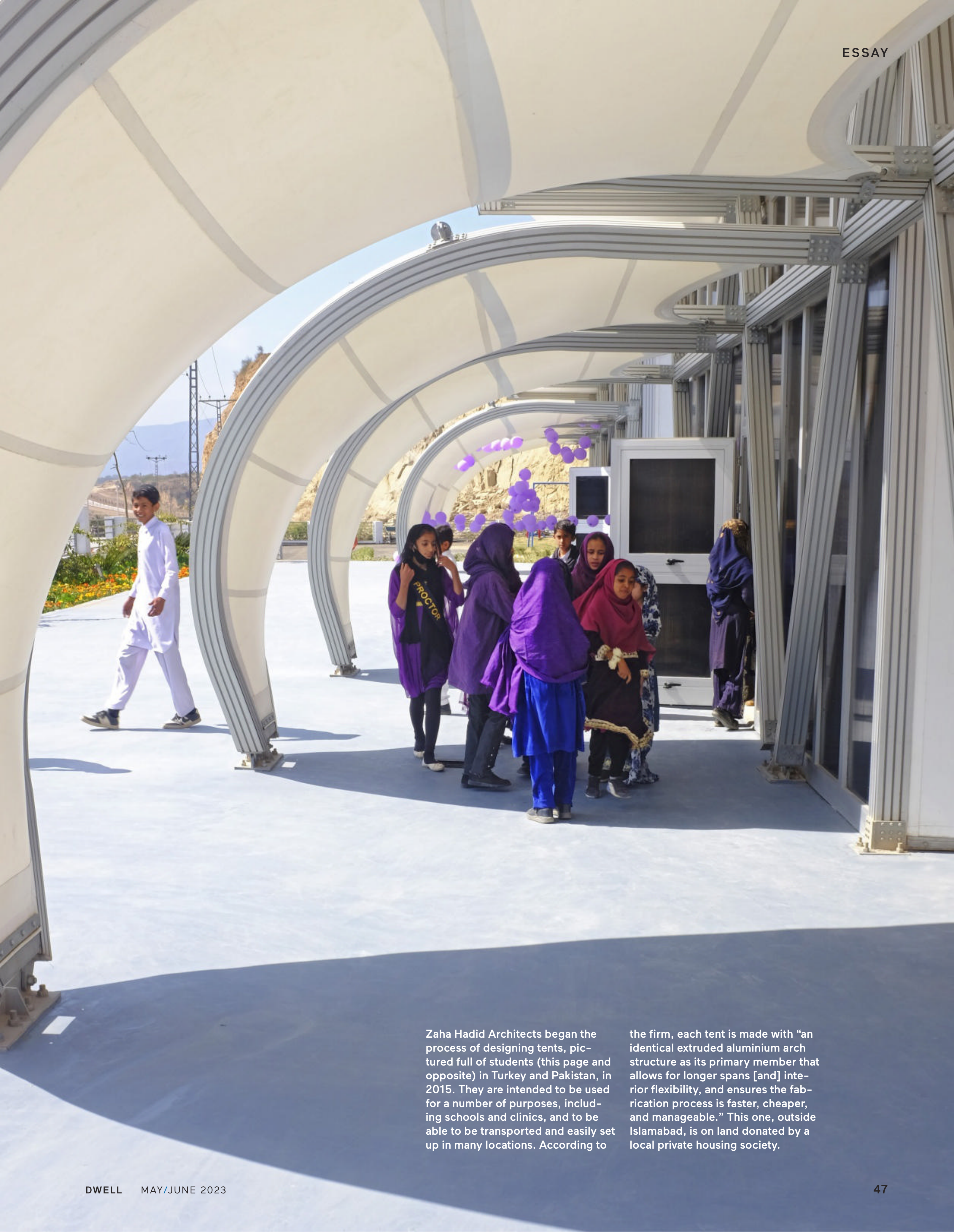
When I visited one of the ZHA-designed schools in Pakistan in March, it looked like the picture come to life. Thirty-two students, mainly internally displaced people (IDPs) who had been uprooted by floods and earthquakes, were lined up in their seats, the heat and sun of the outside diminished by the white walls.

Nestled in a craggy hillside on the outskirts of Islamabad, the school isn't where you might expect it to be. It's hidden away inside a brand-new private housing development, one of many in Pakistan, where faulty state infrastructure and chaotic urban centers are driving a growing middle class into private "societies" that function as their own cities.

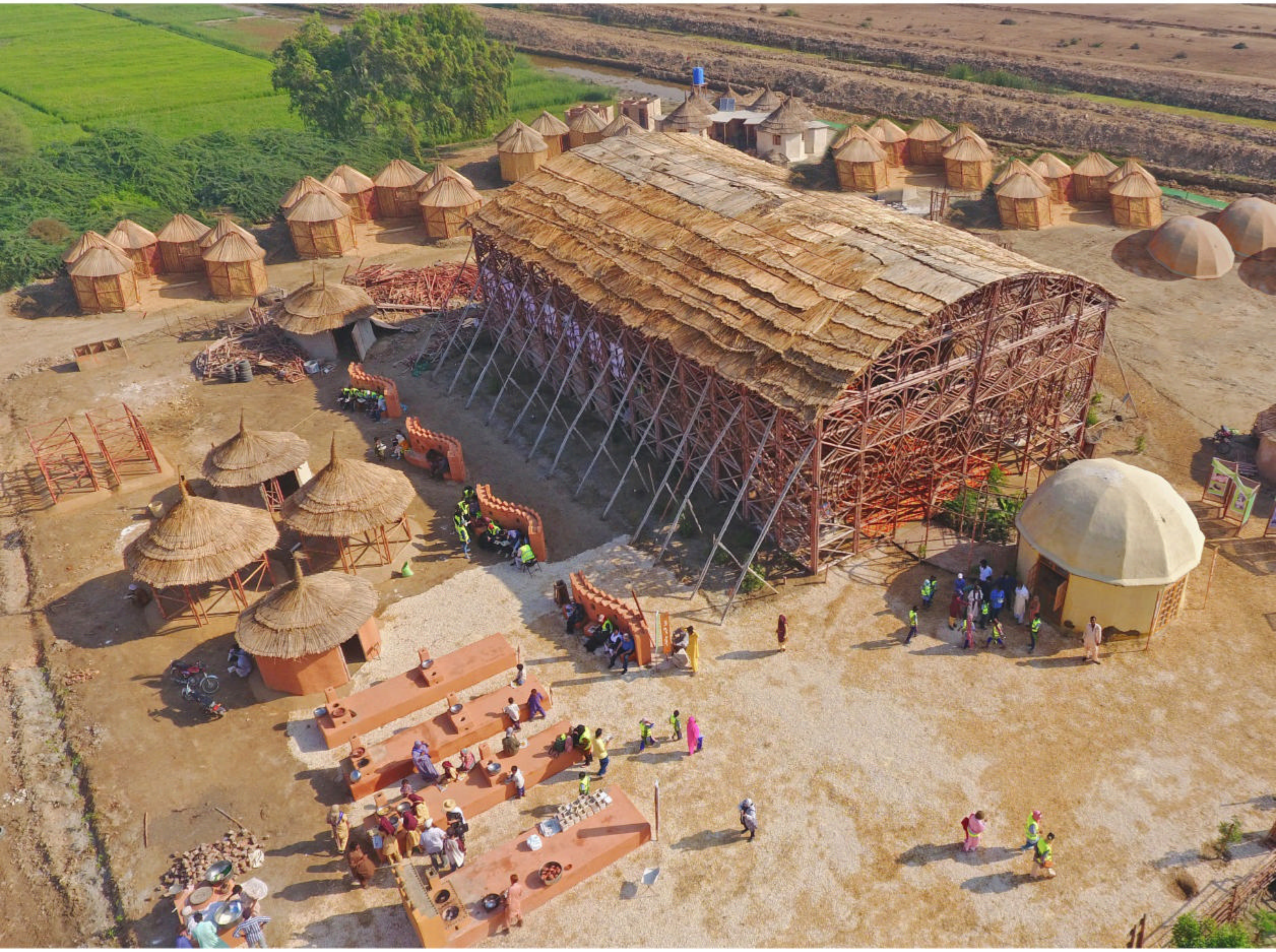
How the school ended up in such a place is telling: Zaha Hadid Architects originally designed it in collaboration with an NGO called Education Above All, a foundation created by Qatar's former first lady, Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, for a Syrian refugee camp in Turkey. Education Above All aimed to bring a pilot of the tent school to Pakistan through another NGO called Alight, which identified a need for a school in the area. A private housing society obliged and donated some land. And, thus, an award-winning architecture firm's structure found its home, not in a refugee or an IDP camp, but at a multimillion-dollar construction site.

Twenty-seven more of the tents piloted in Pakistan and Turkey have been promised by Qatar's World Cup committee to the International Organization for Migration and the Qatar Red Crescent in an effort by the Qataris to increase their charitable footprint around the world. Though the location of this one is unusual, its students, all of whom were pinpointed by aid workers as dropouts in need of stable schooling, don't mind it one bit. >

PHOTOS: LUKE HAYES; MEHER AHMAD (OPPOSITE)



Zaha Hadid Architects began the process of designing tents, pictured full of students (this page and opposite) in Turkey and Pakistan, in 2015. They are intended to be used for a number of purposes, including schools and clinics, and to be able to be transported and easily set up in many locations. According to the firm, each tent is made with "an identical extruded aluminium arch structure as its primary member that allows for longer spans [and] interior flexibility, and ensures the fabrication process is faster, cheaper, and manageable." This one, outside Islamabad, is on land donated by a local private housing society.



I asked them what they thought of the building. “It looks like a cloud,” said a 13-year-old boy named Nauman. “I think it looks like a plane,” another student named Erum told me. I asked the class, whose members ranged in age from 9 to 15 (the school groups them by skill level instead of age), if they like the school. In unison, they responded, “Yessss.”

“We treat the structure like our baby,” the school’s manager, Amna Anum Subhani, told me. I didn’t grasp what she meant until I saw workers carefully wiping down the sides of the tent. Amid the arid landscape and open construction that surrounds the school, the all-white fabric quickly collects dust. One of the workers told me they wash it down every 10 or so days with soap to keep it white and clean.

Inside the school, where the students were celebrating International Women’s Day, I noticed some of the posters and colorful signs—hallmarks of any classroom—sliding off the walls. Subhani clocked me looking: “Yeah, we’ve tried a few different types of tapes,” she laughed. “Nothing works.” She said she has thought about using glue, but she is so afraid of damaging the building that she and her colleagues resorted to using signboards that they roll into the classroom.

Despite some basic design misgivings, everyone from the students to the teachers told me how much they enjoyed being inside such a futuristic structure. “There are two feeder schools that bring students into this one, and everyone is really competitive and excited to come to this campus because of the Zaha Hadid building,” said Subhani. “They feel proud of the school.”

Zaha Hadid Architects is hardly the first high-profile firm to donate designs and prefabricated shelters made for emergency purposes. Dozens of architects, notably the Pritzker Prize–winning Shigeru Ban, have made designing for refugees and displaced people a mainstream practice, celebrated with awards

PHOTOS: ARCHIVE YASMEEN LARI; ROBERTO RODRIGUEZ, COURTESY THE ANGANWADI PROJECT (OPPOSITE)

“How do you empower communities and get them to start being partners in this, not just victims?”

YASMEEN LARI, ARCHITECT

and press coverage. But while these designs bring attention to the cause of housing for refugees and encourage firms to see these populations as deserving of architectural creativity, they can serve as prompts for an imagined refugee more than addressing the real needs of the world’s growing number of displaced people. The practice is predicated on the idea that refugees possess neither the design capability nor the materials to rebuild their lives, an outdated approach to charity that many argue is unsustainable in the face of increasingly frequent disasters.

I’ve spent a fair bit of time in various refugee camps and slums. As an international reporter and documentary producer, I’d go to these places first in the wake of any disaster, be it natural or manmade, where people coalesce for a few months and other times (many times) for several years. In the years since I first began reporting on refugees and displaced people, their numbers have grown at a shocking rate. The latest UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) figures count a whopping 89.3 million people worldwide forcibly displaced from their homes in 2021, up from 38.54 million in 2011. The majority of them aren’t technically refugees but IDPs, affected by conflict, climate change, and other factors.

As their numbers grow, the perceptions of what these 89 million people need haven’t changed much in the popular view. Many still believe refugees seek only temporary shelter, despite the overwhelming evidence that displaced people rarely return to their original homes. As such, the buildings that are often designed to house them are temporary too, enough to keep them safe from the elements for a short while and afford some privacy, but not much else.

Yet a growing body of architects and design firms continue to put out proposals, year after year, of ways to reimagine the temporary refugee abode. In the briefs covering some of the many architectural plans intended to be used for such housing, two words appear frequently: “can” and “could.” *Could* a mud-spraying drone be used to build domes in disaster zones? *Can* a structure made of futuristic concrete sheets be rolled and set into permanent form, building skills not required? *Could* a woven structural tent house refugees in a desert? In a sector desperately in need of resources, many of these designs *could* have a lasting impact, but it’s rare >

Architect Yasmeen Lari’s Makli Zero Carbon Cultural Centre (above) was built in Pakistan in 2017. It is made of bamboo, a highly sustainable material found locally. “I believe in zero carbon. I don’t believe in high-tech solutions. I think the world needs to recognize that, and architects ought to do that,” Lari says. In India (right), the Australian NGO The Anganwadi Project completed this school, named Harivillu 1, in 2019. According to the group, “a double-layer roof construction…reduces heat penetration into the class and encourages passive ventilation.”

Architect Jesús Porras Montesino collaborated with the nonprofit Kounkuey Design Initiative to help build the Kibera Public Space Project in Kenya (left). "I'm less interested in aesthetics and more interested in ensuring every square centimeter in a building will be useful," he has said of his work.

PHOTO: COURTESY KOUNKUEY DESIGN INITIATIVE

to see them make it beyond a slick proposal, let alone implemented at scale.

Architects like Yasmeen Lari, who has dedicated the last 20 years of her career to emergency and low-cost housing, believe the idea behind these proposals is flawed. She's referred to it as "the international colonial charity model" in interviews, predicated on importing design and charity following events like the monsoon floods that affected some 33 million Pakistanis last year. "Why do we think that we have to give them everything?" she asks me. "They have their own capabilities. It's just a matter of providing them with training and capacity." Lari is critical of prefab or rehabilitation efforts that carry high carbon footprints: concrete, burnt brick, imported goods that contribute to the increasing number of climate change disasters these charitable donations are meant to ameliorate.

She is no stranger to these materials: The first half of her career featured them, utilized in private houses and hotels created in the South Asian Modernist style defined by Lari and her peers, like Balkrishna Doshi and Bashirul Haq. But being based in Pakistan meant Lari had a front seat to frequent disasters and conflicts: It's what drove her to begin designing low-cost structures for poor and displaced people after officially retiring. "I've had the luxury of giving up my practice and architecture, and I've been able to devote a lot of my time among the poor," she says. "And I think that's what's shaping everything I do."

Now, Lari's practice is defined by indigenous materials—lime, bamboo, mud—and "cobuilding, codesigning, cocreativity" with displaced people. "The poor are my clients today," she says, "I learn so much from their traditional heritage." Lari refers to one of tens of thousands of housing units she's helped develop across Pakistan after disasters like the 2005 earthquake, which affected some 3.5 million people, and, most recently, the 2022 floods.

Lari has created prefabricated units as well, which are constructed with panel sheets of locally sourced bamboo, but the flexibility of the design allows recipients to make bespoke homes. "It allows the possibility of the household and the family to finish it how they want," she explains. "So it's not just about building something. How do you empower communities and get them to start being partners in this, not just victims?"

The result of this approach has been breathtaking in its scale. Through Lari's organization, the Heritage Foundation of Pakistan, more than 50,000 zero-carbon shelters have been built. They've proved to be uniquely resilient: Her homes withstood floods in 2012 and 2013 and earthquakes in 2013 and 2015. Even now, as Lari continues to work in the flood-stricken communities in southern Pakistan, she's devising ways for villages to protect themselves from recurring floods with moats and fences made of bamboo. The techniques are spreading: Lari tells me her artisans have been teaching others how to build their homes the same way.

But while her structures are quite literally dirt cheap, often costing less than $200 per shelter, they possess their own beauty and charm. Although the homes blend seamlessly with the local, vernacular buildings, Lari's fingerprint and ethos appear all over them, nods to the organic Brutalism of her buildings from the '70s and the purposeful approaches to space and light. "It's not like I'm overlooking their design," Lari tells me. "That's the biggest strength I have: to design in a manner that is good for everybody and will look good also." Lari's structures provide the canvas for the homeowners, the displaced and poor she designs for, to make the shelters their own: painted folk art on the walls, lacelike mud figures along doors and windows.

Despite Lari's outsize impact in a country frequently in need of emergency shelters, her ethos is considered radical in an NGO sector defined by cookie-cutter approaches to the world's growing refugee crisis.

The Zaha Hadid school near Islamabad, promoted as a "robust, cost-effective, and lightweight modular architectural system," took upward of four months to import and install; for two of those months, the materials were stuck in customs. Every aspect of the structure, down to the screws, was shipped internationally to Pakistan. One of the school's caretakers described the importation and construction process to me in detail, including the search for the perfect plexiglass panels for its non-fabric walls. Ultimately, he said, the school couldn't find the correct kind locally and imported those as well. When the fabric rips, or even if a screw must be tightened, the local crew must use the custom materials left behind by the people who built the structure. Despite Pakistan's many architecture and engineering >

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schools' putting out thousands of industry-standard engineers yearly, the NGO consortium that made the tent school in Pakistan brought in multiple Turkish workers to build the structure, a feat taking multiple weeks, while they were put up in hotels in nearby Islamabad. Education Above All, one of the NGOs behind the project, says the tents cost around 207 euros per square meter when produced at mass scale, though that accounts only for manufacturing, not transportation or installation. It's unclear how much the pilot project in Pakistan cost to produce and erect. In a statement to Dwell, Zaha Hadid Architects says the tents are cost-effective. "The cost of each structure is comparable to permanent structures built for displaced communities, making it an affordable solution for these communities in need."

The cost and time that went into the ZHA school's construction explain why the staff treats it with kid gloves. For a group of underprivileged students in one corner of Pakistan, it's an incredible gift to have that level of donation and care. The more I learned about the project from administrators and teachers, the more I understood that they care for the tent structure as a state-of-the-art facility, one just as expensive and noteworthy as the private schools attended by Pakistan's elite.

But if the intended goal was to give a group of deserving students a permanent structure, would one customized to their needs and able to support the school and staff for years to come have served them better? The tent school, while striking against the red dusty mountain blasted to make room for the concrete foundation it is built on (another hefty expense), doesn't contain air conditioners, a must for the increasingly hot summers in Pakistan. (The school has bought its own and created holes in the tent to accommodate them.) Nor does it make room for the administrators' building, which was constructed separately to the side of the school, housing washrooms for students, which the tents lack.

The design origins of the tent outside Islamabad explain why it feels unmatched to the Pakistani students' needs: It wasn't designed with them in mind. Zaha Hadid Architects began making prototypes of the tent school in 2015. An early report assessed the need for a school building in a refugee camp on the Turkish border with Syria. I visited one just miles away in 2015, the same year as the initial assessment—rows of white UNHCR tents house tens of thousands of Syrians, many of whom ran from ISIS. It's easy to see where Zaha Hadid Architects pulled its inspiration.

The firm says its team put in immense efforts on the tents, "which are designed to be weather-proof, multiuse modular tent structures that can be easily moved and reassembled, incorporating components that can also be upcycled or recycled, making them ideal for displaced populations." Architects presented the design to UNHCR, which recommended making it more permanent and including toilets. "We deliberately left this out as those facilities are already existing on the site," a report from ZHA said. "Although the construction of more permanent structures might be more cost-effective, the very delicate political climate in Turkey wouldn't allow for them to be built." Though designed for the Turkish camp, the tents have since been installed in other settings outside Pakistan, such as the FIFA World Cup in Qatar, with plans to deploy them in Syria and Yemen, plus additional sites in Turkey.

I have no doubt the architects who created the design for the Turkish refugee camp built the best version of a school for that camp's needs. But one is left to wonder whether a prefabricated design is worth the cost and whether it makes sense in lieu of a more intentionally permanent structure in a place like Pakistan. If the idea behind designing these tents was to prompt other major firms to consider the plight of the refugee, then perhaps the Zaha Hadid model of charitable donation can be seen as a PR win, a way to bring attention to the cause. Considering the overwhelming needs of the world's displaced, and the frequency of climate change disasters, particularly in the developing world, it's difficult to see how imported modular designs like this one can meet the needs of the moment.

For Lari, architects have a unique ability to rise to the occasion. "The world has changed," she says emphatically. "If our profession wants to remain valuable to the world, many of us will have to change." ■

Bangladeshi architect Rizvi Hassan designed this Safe Space for Rohingya Women & Girls; it too is largely made of thatch and bamboo, with some steel. In 2019, Hassan built it with the help of local construction workers, who he has said suggested changes to the design based on their experience. The walls were painted by local women for whom the space was intended.

PHOTO: COURTESY RIZVI HASSAN

On Cloud Nine

Kolbe Windows & Doors helps frame and extend the views of a lakeside renovation in eastern Minnesota.

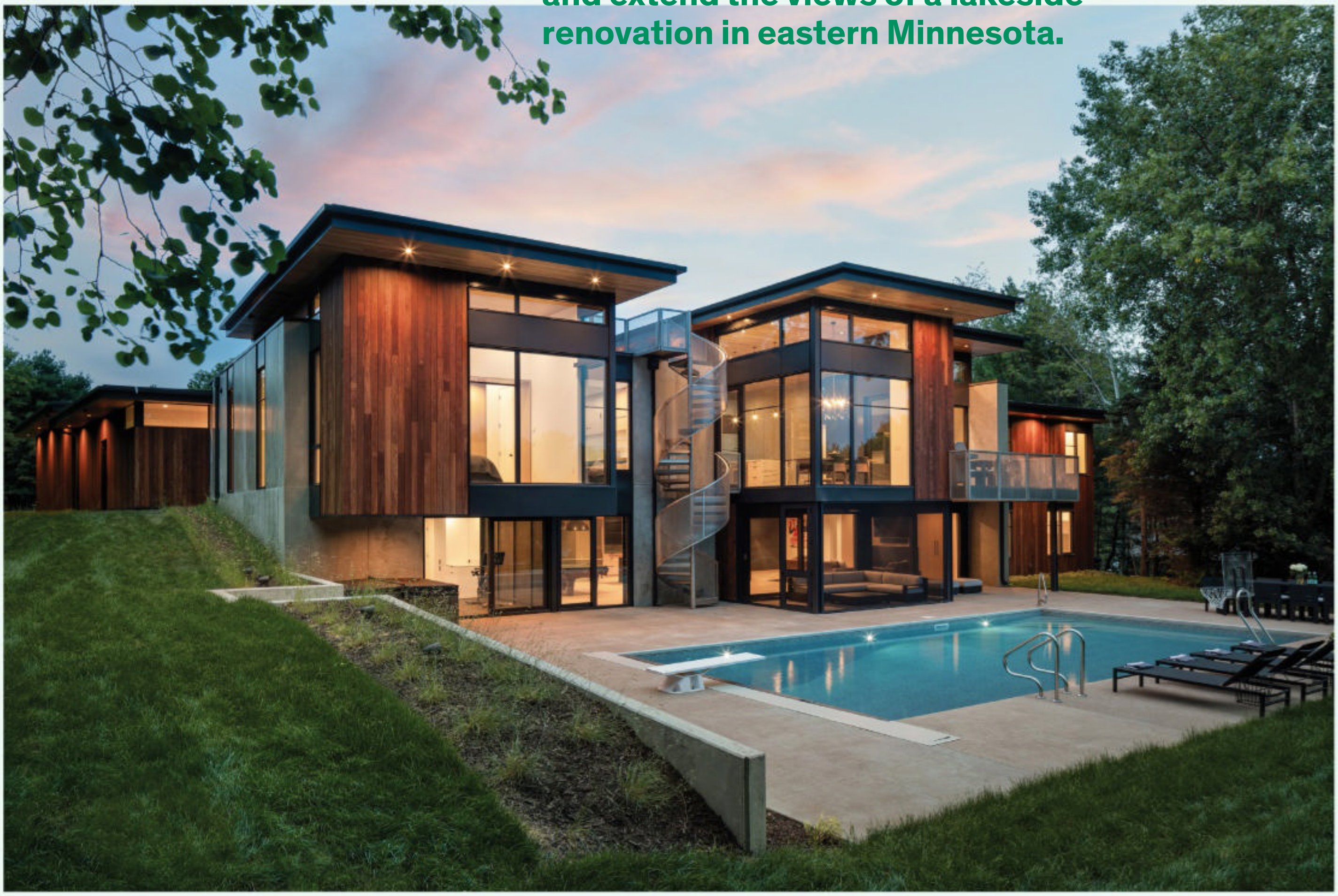

PHOTO: JIM KRUGER/LANDMARK PHOTOGRAPHY

Set on a six-acre wooded site in eastern Minnesota, the Cloud Forest House draws its inspiration—and name—from an unlikely source more than 3,000 miles away.

The owners were originally attracted to the lakeside property because the immersive natural surroundings reminded them of their travels to the cloud forests of Ecuador, but after 10 years, they were ready to explore improvements to meet the needs of their young family of five.

Sara and Jeremy Imhoff of Imprint Architecture and Design were brought on to lay out a new floor plan that extended the home's sight lines while providing privacy for the parents and their growing children.

The husband-and-wife team chose to incorporate Kolbe Windows & Doors' VistaLuxe AL LINE into the plan to connect and transcend the home's defined indoor and outdoor spaces. The newly opened-up great room gives the impression of entire walls of glass by combining lift-and-slide doors with large direct sets and clerestory windows in a single configuration.

"With the Cloud Forest House, we have a lot of expansive glass in a very private wooded setting. We have to think about the context of where the house is and what the owners are looking at through all of that glass," says Jeremy. "What I really appreciate about the windows is that the frames allow us to maximize their viewing area, blurring the lines between the inside and outside."

To further that indoor/outdoor connection, the homeowners worked with Imprint to select a material palette that merged contemporary indoor comfort with rugged outdoor materials. Locally sourced concrete panels, ironwood siding and decking, and exposed structural steel beams on the exterior of the home complement the all-aluminum, onyx-colored frames of Kolbe Windows & Doors.

Sara adds: "Kolbe Windows & Doors was a huge part of leaning into the open concept, envisioning the new design with the right materials."

Get the full home tour at **dwell.com/kolbe.**

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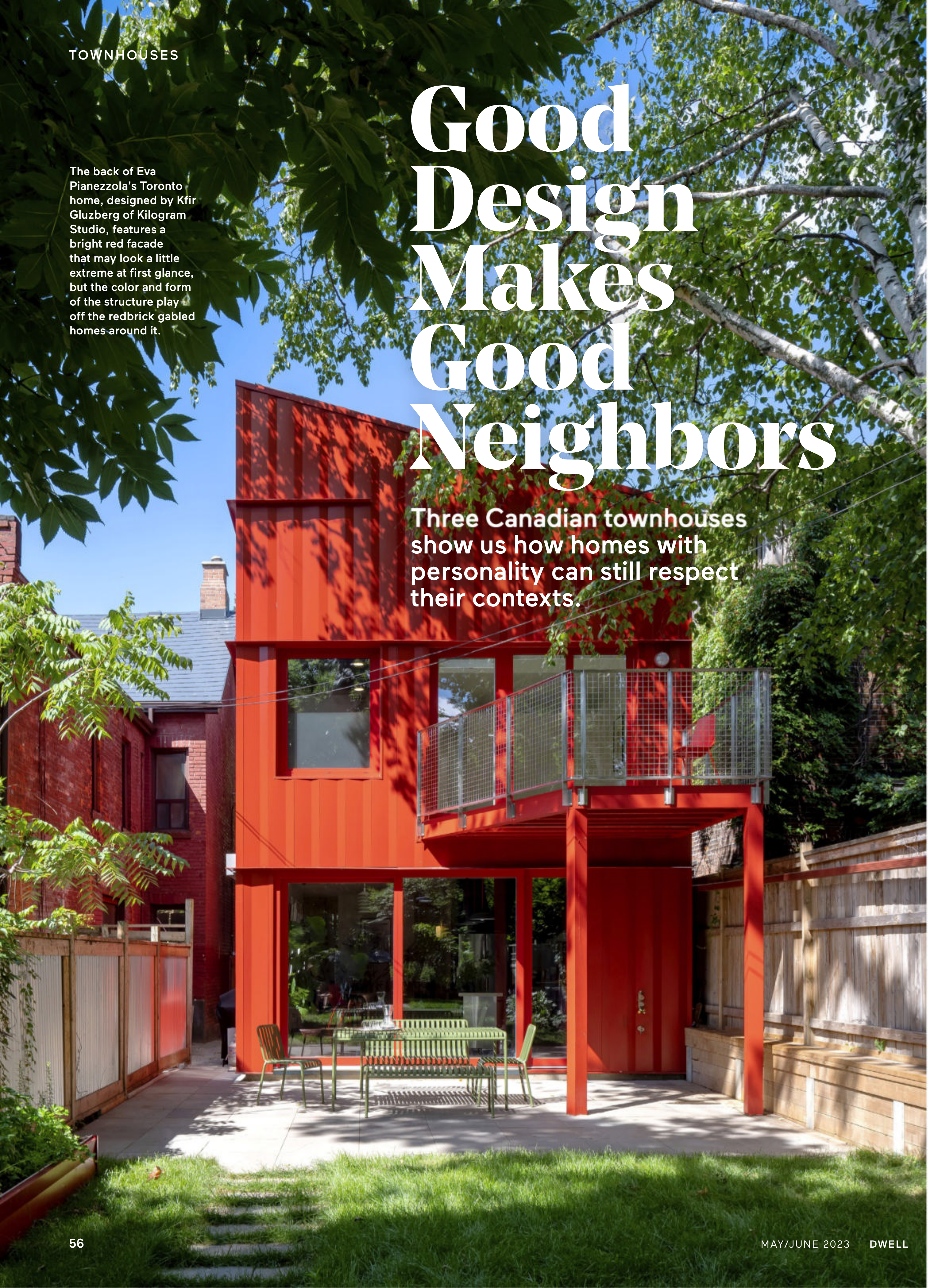

Good Design Makes Good Neighbors

Three Canadian townhouses show us how homes with personality can still respect their contexts.

The back of Eva Pianezzola's Toronto home, designed by Kfir Gluzberg of Kilogram Studio, features a bright red facade that may look a little extreme at first glance, but the color and form of the structure play off the redbrick gabled homes around it.

PHOTO: SCOTT NORSWORTHY

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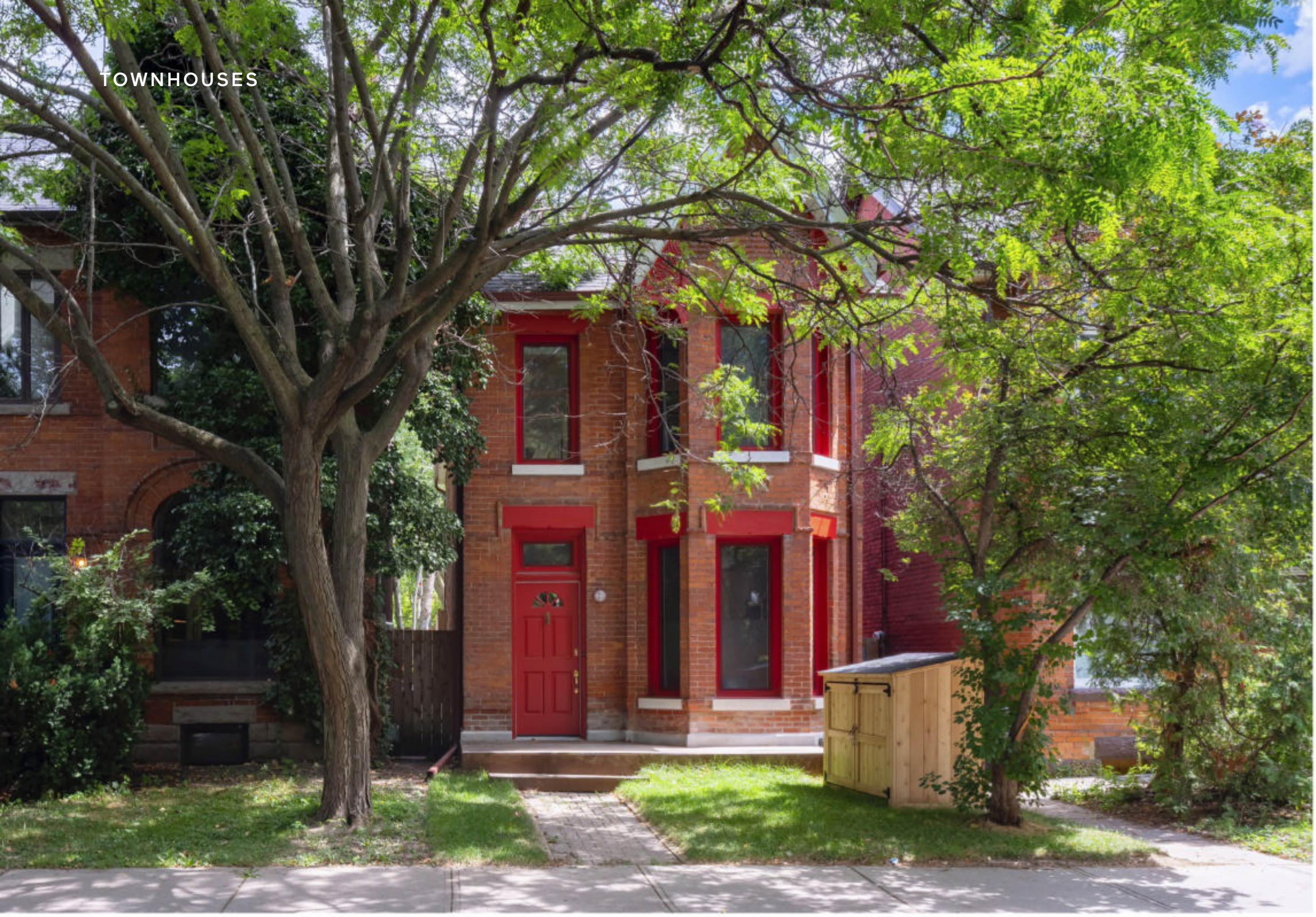


Subtle Standout

A Toronto townhouse maintains a punchy profile while fitting in with its neighbors.

TEXT BY
Kelly Boutsalis

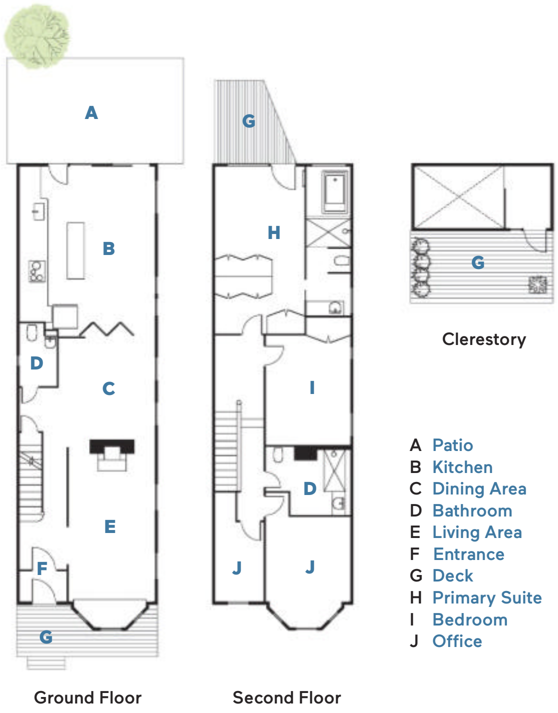
PHOTOS BY | @NORSWORTHYSCOTT
Scott Norsworthy

Off a main thoroughfare in downtown Toronto, Eva Pianezzola's house is tucked within a quiet street of Victorian townhomes. Its front facade blends in with the neighborhood of ornate redbrick mansions, but there are details—bright red trim at the windows and upside-down address numbers outside the front door—that hint at the surprising elements behind it.

"The backs of these Victorians are often ticky-tacky, and there are all sorts of ad hoc additions," says Kilogram Studio's Kfir Gluzberg, who worked with Eva on the

Glimmer House

ARCHITECT Kilogram Studio
LOCATION Toronto, Ontario



A Patio
B Kitchen
C Dining Area
D Bathroom
E Living Area
F Entrance
G Deck
H Primary Suite
I Bedroom
J Office

ILLUSTRATION: LOHNES+WRIGHT

design of the house. This project has something different.

Eva, an urban designer and architect, wanted the long backyard to be the star of the design. It's home to a lush garden in the warmer months and becomes a snow-covered wonderland in the colder months, and it's presided over by a bold, red facade meant to complement the red brick of the neighborhood but also to contrast sharply with the elements.

"I don't love red, but for the house it made so much sense," says Eva. She moved in just before Christmas 2021 with her computer programmer partner, Mattia Gheda, and large goldendoodle, Lola.

The 1,840-square-foot, two-story house has a living area off the front entrance that flows into an open dining and kitchen space. The second floor contains two offices and two bedrooms. The back wall has large windows, a sliding door to the patio, and a slender doggy door for Lola.

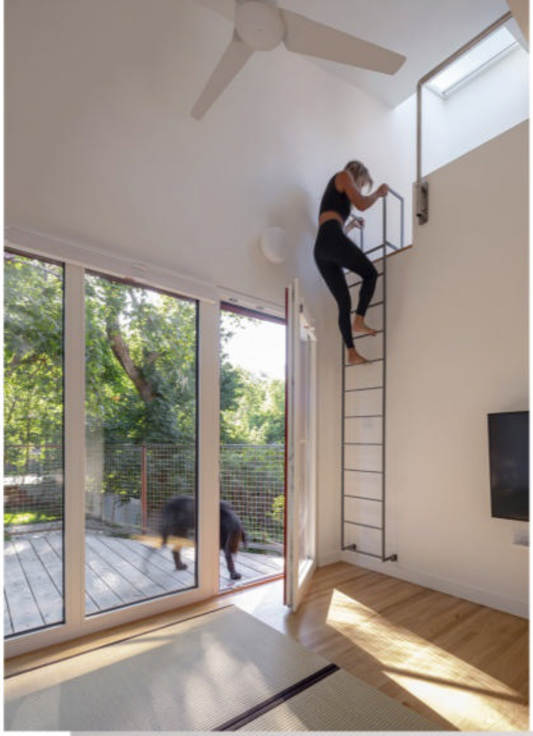
Though the red stays mostly on the exterior, pops of color enliven the interiors as well. Rich and glossy blue cabinets in the kitchen help to reflect natural light, and aluminum tambour covers keep messier ingredients and appliances out of sight.

Functionality is key for Eva, especially when her family visits from Italy. Thus, the powder room becomes a wet room with a handheld showerhead and hidden drains, and the living room can be reconfigured to sleep many guests.

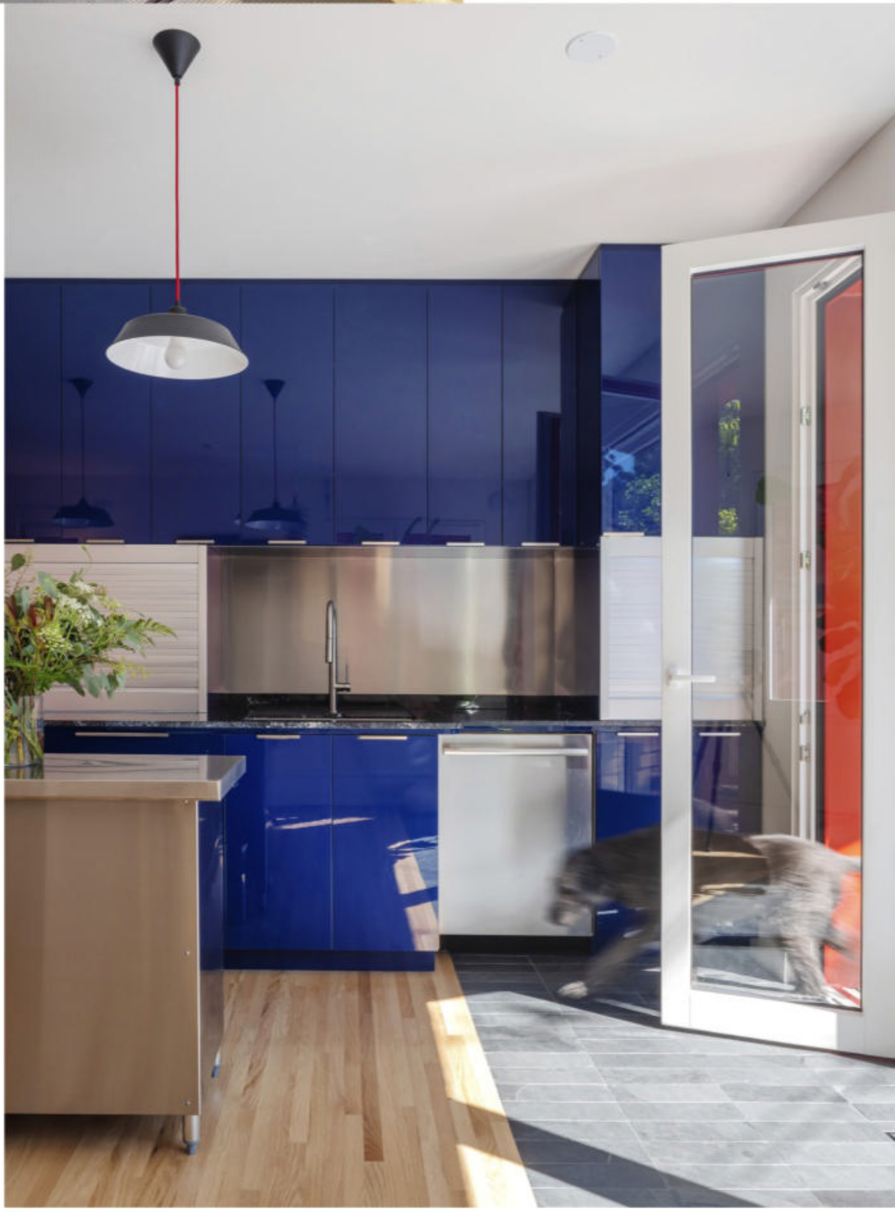
That resourceful mindset was drawn from Eva's love of sailing. Having spent a lot of time on boats, she came to appreciate how small spaces were used so ingeniously. This influence shows up in places like the main bedroom, which features a ladder that leads to a skylighted nook.

"There are a lot of things that connect to that nautical feeling," says Gluzberg. "The skylights are very deep and narrow, so you're always getting a feeling like you're immersed in something."

It's funny that a home can be so transportive when, on first glance, it blends so easily with the rest of the buildings on the street. "Apart from the red frames and the new windows, you don't know what's going on in this house," says Eva. "With such a bold design and color, it's important for it to be a bit discreet. It's fun, but it's not in your face—I hope." ■

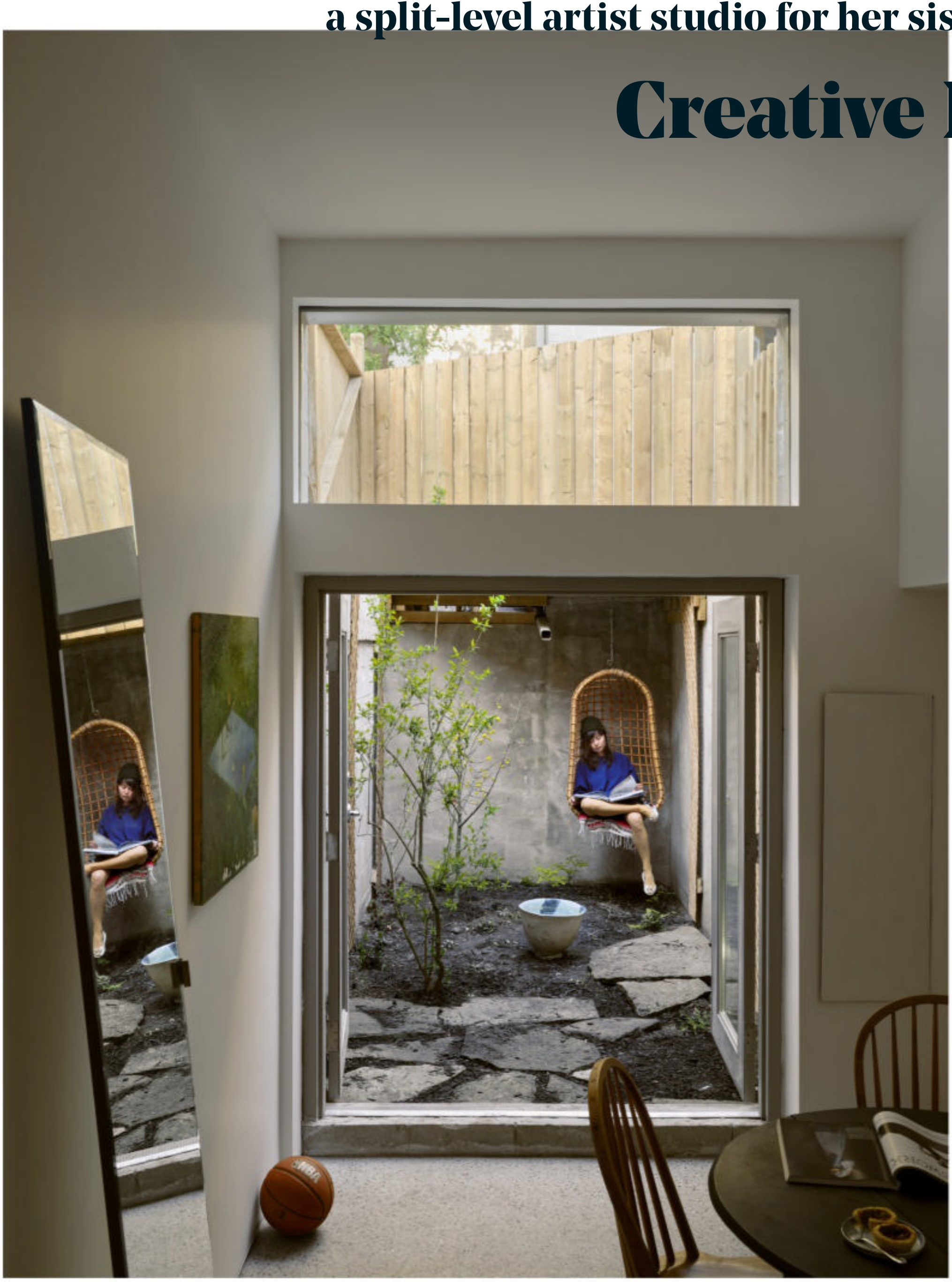


Sterling windows let light in the front facade (opposite), and a Velux skylight illuminates a loft in the main bedroom (left), which Eva uses to relax and meditate. "It's a big space," Eva says, "so I think it needed to be lightened up." For the kitchen (below), she says, "blue always felt right. I think white kitchens feel a little sterile."



A Toronto architect reimagines her father's backyard parking space as a split-level artist studio for her sister.

Creative Block



Architect Lia Maston (left) designed the basement of this laneway house in Toronto's Chinatown as a light and airy studio for her sister, artist Sara Maston. It opens to a sunken courtyard that makes space for reading and contemplation.

TEXT BY
Andrea Yu

PHOTOS BY | @2SPACEPHOTO
Doublespace Photography

Painter and multimedia artist Sara Maston is no stranger to picking up and moving. The gentrification of Toronto's neighborhoods has caused the warehouses and affordable studios she previously rented to be torn down or renovated, leaving Sara scrambling to find new spaces in which to create. "A lot of condo developments are taking over buildings that were occupied by artists," she says.

Sara's sister, Lia, an architect, proposed a solution in a far more stable location. Their father lives in a historic Victorian townhouse in Chinatown that had a two-car concrete parking pad in the backyard, accessed by a rear laneway. Lia envisioned building a suite where Sara could make and display art, rest, and have friends over.

With a footprint measuring just 17.5 feet by 20 feet, the space gave Lia little to work with. So she designed a split-level unit that the duo call their “art bunker.” It has four distinct zones, with ceiling heights ranging from 7 to 12 feet and an impressive 620 square feet of living space.

Sara does most of her painting in the basement, which offers a surprising sense of lightness. Here, double glass doors with a transom window frame a sunken courtyard planted with native species like periwinkle, red dogwood, and a ground-covering fern. There’s also a kitchen on the lower level.

The main floor provides a place for Sara to showcase her work. “Having a gallery space is a useful way to look at a piece and see how it exists outside the studio and if it’s resolved,” she says. Industrial Dutch doors lead to a small backyard, which serves as an extension of the gallery when groups gather. (The sisters envision hosting poetry readings and small concerts here in the future.)

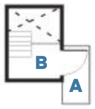
On the upper levels of the studio are a compact bathroom with a shower and a bedroom with a double-height ceiling. The top floor holds a retreat and tearoom (Sara is also a ceramicist and makes teacups, which she uses and displays here) with a small balcony that may one day hold an herb garden.

Like Sara’s artwork, the project nods to the sisters’ Chinese heritage and the surrounding neighborhood. In the basement, there’s a large painting of a cabbage, a symbol of wealth. Outside, hanging above the main entrance, there’s an octagonal feng shui *bagua*. “The mirror in the middle reflects away evil spirits,” Lia explains.

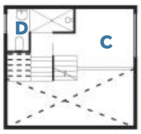
The sisters think of the building as “ugly/beautiful”—it has an industrial exterior with metal doors and a concrete block facade, which blends in with neighboring garages. But the interior is a cozy, welcoming space. “The design is like the resident, because it’s reserved and closed on the exterior, but it’s warm and expressive on the interior,” says Lia. ■

The Art Bunker N ↑

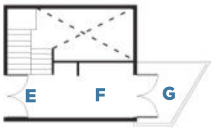
ARCHITECT **Firma Architecture**
LOCATION **Toronto, Ontario**



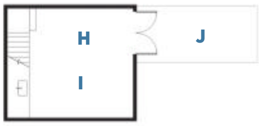
Pop-Up Level



Second Floor



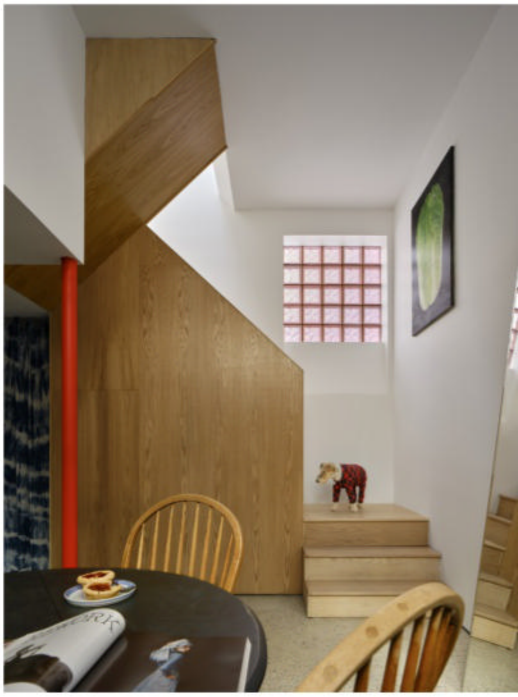
First Floor



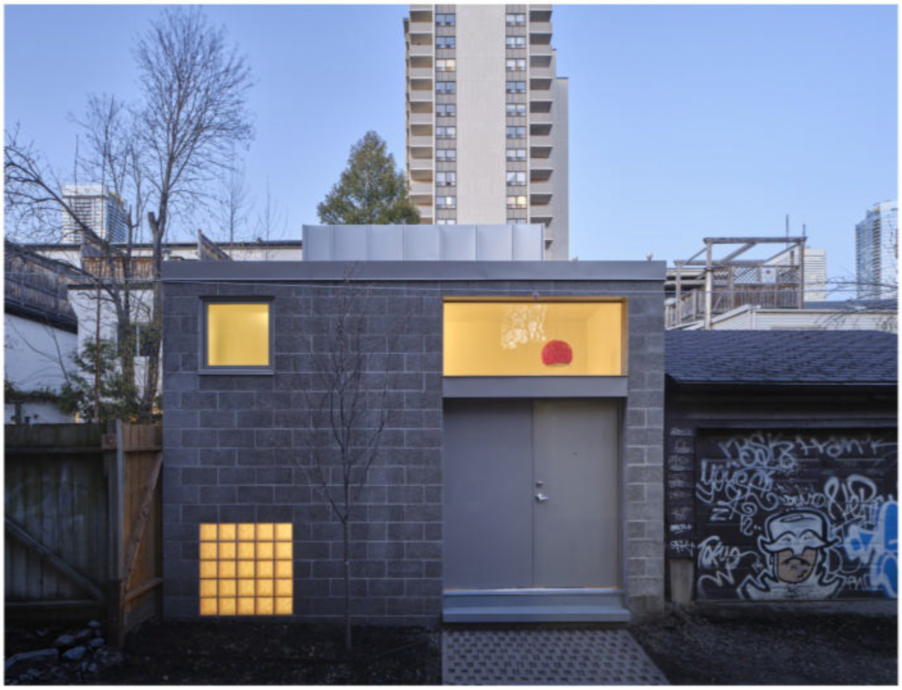
Basement

A Green Roof
B Tearoom
C Bedroom
D Bathroom
E Entrance
F Living Area/Studio
G Terrace
H Living/Dining Area
I Kitchen
J Secret Garden

ILLUSTRATION: LOHNES+WRIGHT



The oak stairs and railings (above) were built by the sisters’ carpenter father, Mikal, with the help of a contractor. A closer inspection of the nondescript concrete exterior (below) reveals bits of colored glass aggregate. “There’s a little universe in each block,” Lia says.

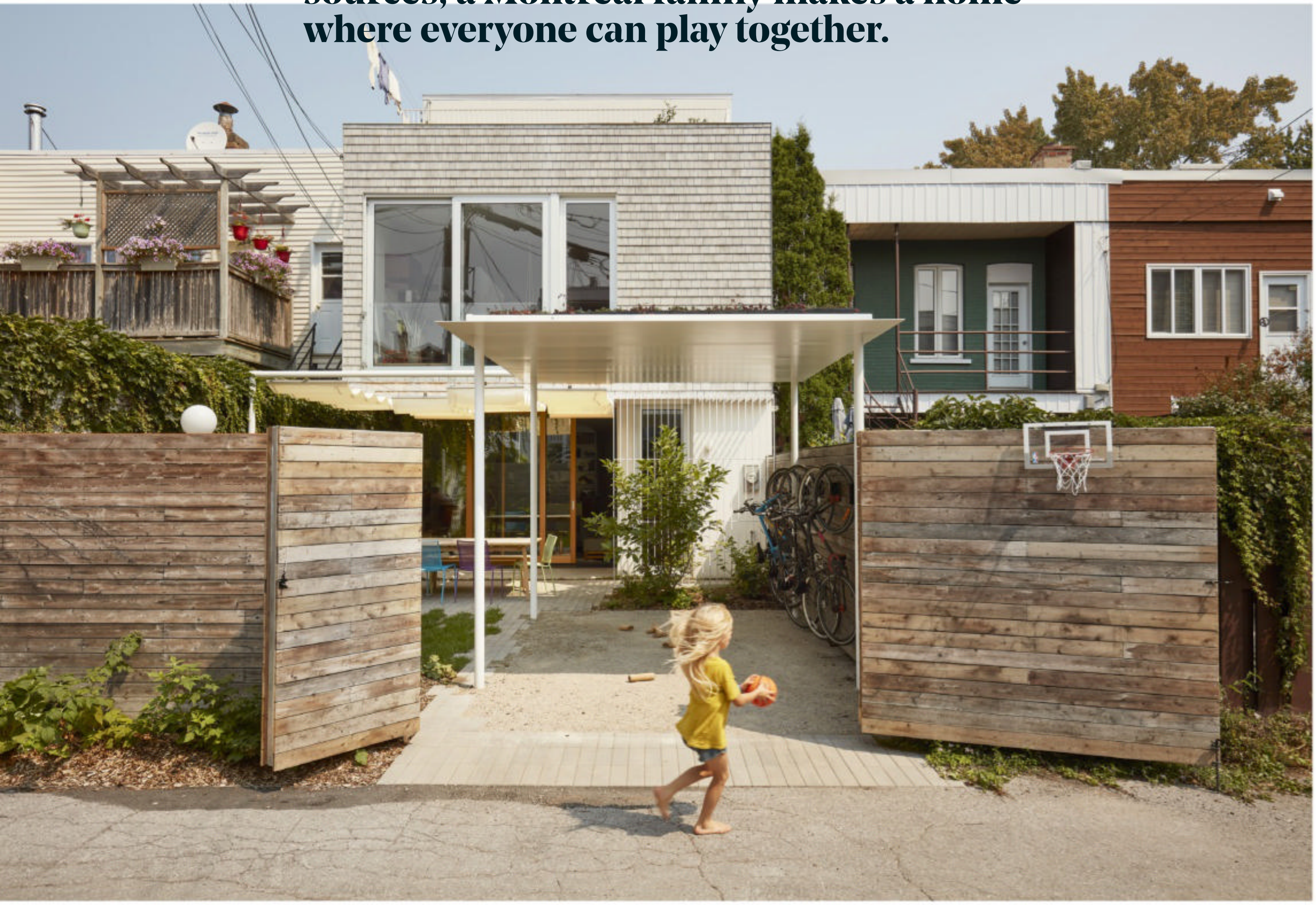


TEXT BY
Olivier Vallerand

PHOTOS BY | @MAXIMEBROUILLET
Maxime Brouillet

Connect the Dots

Drawing inspiration from surprising sources, a Montreal family makes a home where everyone can play together.



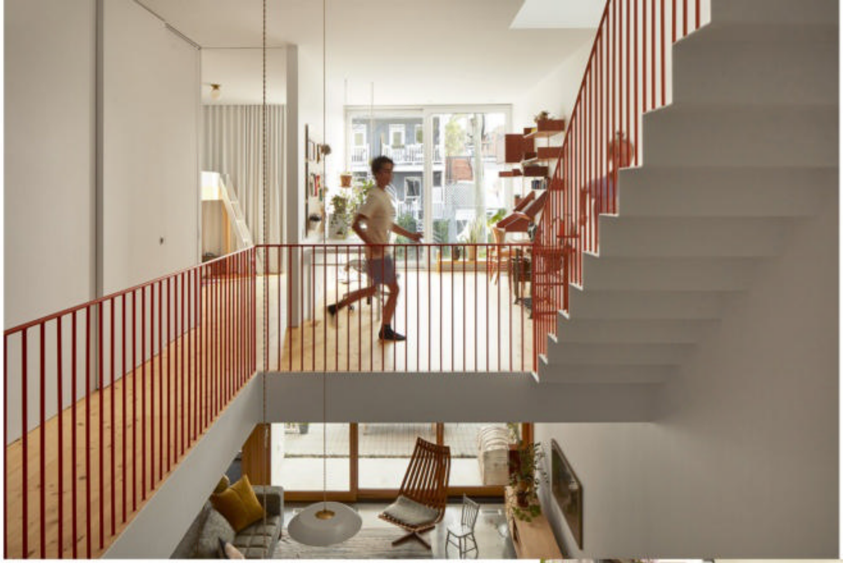
When Idir Saïdani and Mélanie Labrosse asked La Shed Architecture to design their future home in Montreal, the firm was immediately taken by the playful eclecticism of their mood board. “They didn’t want a perfect, clean thing,” says founding partner Sébastien Parent. “There were vintage elements, there were supermodern elements.... It had a patchwork quality.”

The firm helped the couple find a downtrodden duplex in the Plateau-Mont-Royal neighborhood and drew up plans to rebuild it from scratch as a 2,750-square-foot, two-and-a-half-story home with common areas on the ground floor and bedrooms above. The clients collaborated with the architects closely on the design, suggesting playful details that would support family life with their three sons. “During construction, when I saw the house rising, I said, ‘We will need an intercom to talk to each other!’” recalls Mélanie. “The plumber heard me and said, ‘Yes, this can be done.’” Now, a pipe hidden in the wall has an opening at each floor to transmit their voices.

A central atrium also connects the family members with one another—and the outdoors. The space is anchored by the kitchen island, in accordance with Quebec’s cultural tradition of placing the kitchen at the core of the house. The space is daylit so that “on a sunny day, we can feel when a cloud passes by,” says Mélanie.

The compact lot, typical of the dense urban neighborhood, provided little outdoor space—but La Shed found ways to connect the home to nature. On the ground floor, a small planted backyard with a bicycle “carport” opens to the back alley. The third floor is smaller to free up room for roof terraces—one with views of Mount Royal and one off the primary bedroom that holds a squirrel-protected vegetable garden. There, the couple can see bees pollinating their future meals.

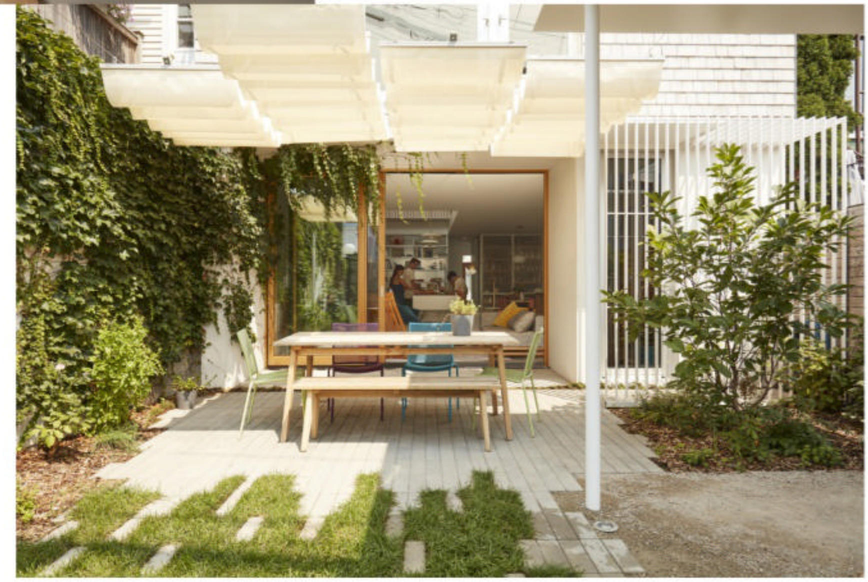
But the family’s favorite space is the ground-floor playroom. Here, a circular table lifts from the floor to reveal a sitting area, and movable lace curtains can create a puppet stage, a projection screen, or a



Mélanie Labrosse and Idir Saïdani's Plateau-Mont-Royal home opens to the neighborhood with double gate doors (opposite). Beneath a skylight, a central staircase with a red railing climbs from the ground-level living areas to the more private upper levels, which have pine flooring. "It's a soft wood," says architect Sébastien Parent, "but as soon as there's a little scratch, it's more beautiful." Friche Atelier landscaped the shaded backyard (below), where an Établi table and Le Balconier chairs cater to alfresco dining. Ariane Martel-Labrecque and Ariane Ouellet-Pelletier designed a clever table for the playroom (bottom) that swivels flush to the floor when not in use.

cozy fort for kids and adults alike. "When the house was completed, Idir and Mélanie invited everyone who had worked on the project over," says Parent. "At two in the morning, we were all playing games in that room, with even the contractors sitting on the floor."

The playroom is separated from the kitchen by a bookcase backed in frosted glass, and a porthole lets the parents check in on the kids while cooking. As Mélanie points out, tiny details like this help them feel truly connected to their children as they grow: "We've been able to take so many photos of the kids playing without feeling like we're disturbing them in their moment." ■



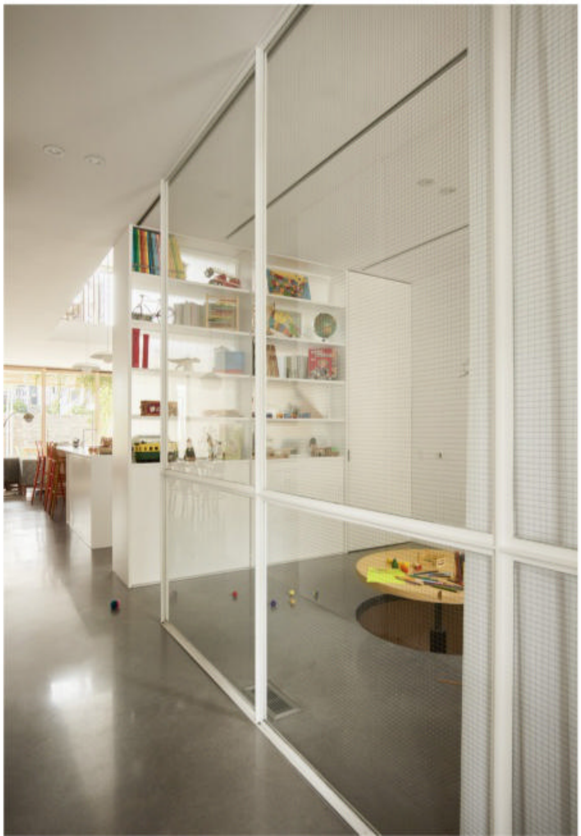
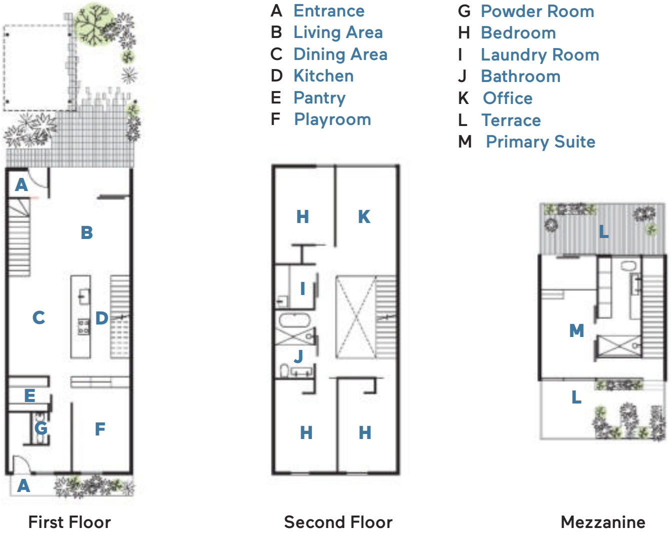


ILLUSTRATION: LOHNES+WRIGHT

Maison de Brébeuf

ARCHITECT La Shed Architecture
LOCATION Montreal, Quebec

A Entrance
B Living Area
C Dining Area
D Kitchen
E Pantry
F Playroom
G Powder Room
H Bedroom
I Laundry Room
J Bathroom
K Office
L Terrace
M Primary Suite



First Floor

Second Floor

Mezzanine

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The Ash 1626, for example, combines a contemporary design with a more traditional profile. It gets its name from its small footprint at 1,626 square feet, but it's more spacious than it looks, thanks to its open floor plan and large window systems. The two-bedroom, two-and-a-half-bathroom home is designed with a single center beam and consists of two farmhouse structures that are connected by a flat-roofed entryway to separate the public and private areas. One homeowner in Wisconsin worked with a Lindal representative to include a sunroom and office on the right side of her single-story home, convert a pantry off the kitchen into a powder room, and add a dog wash basin in the laundry room for her four-legged housemates.

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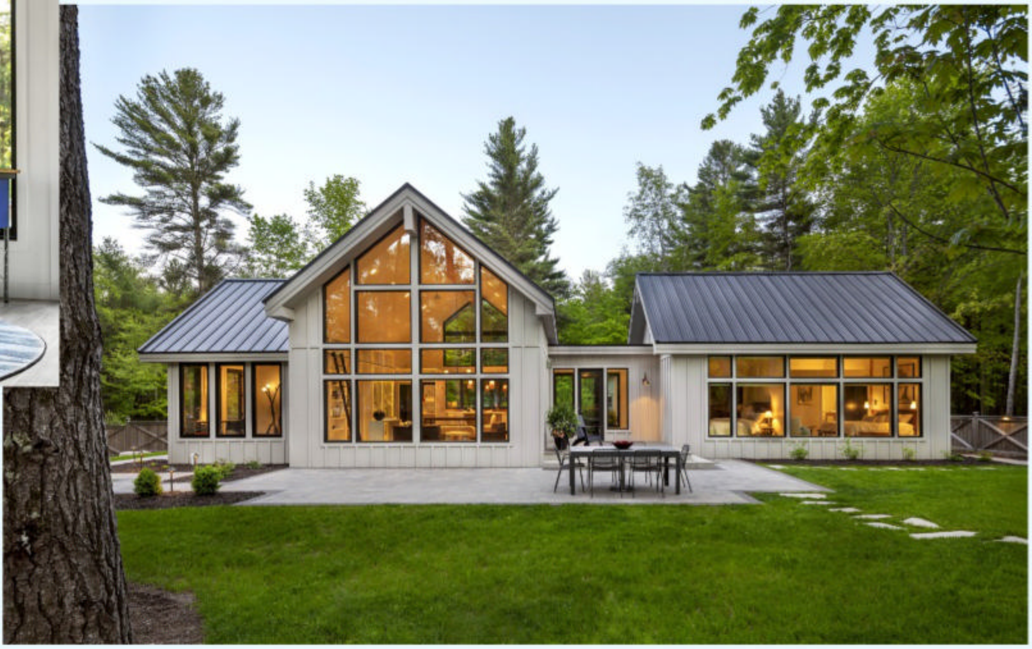

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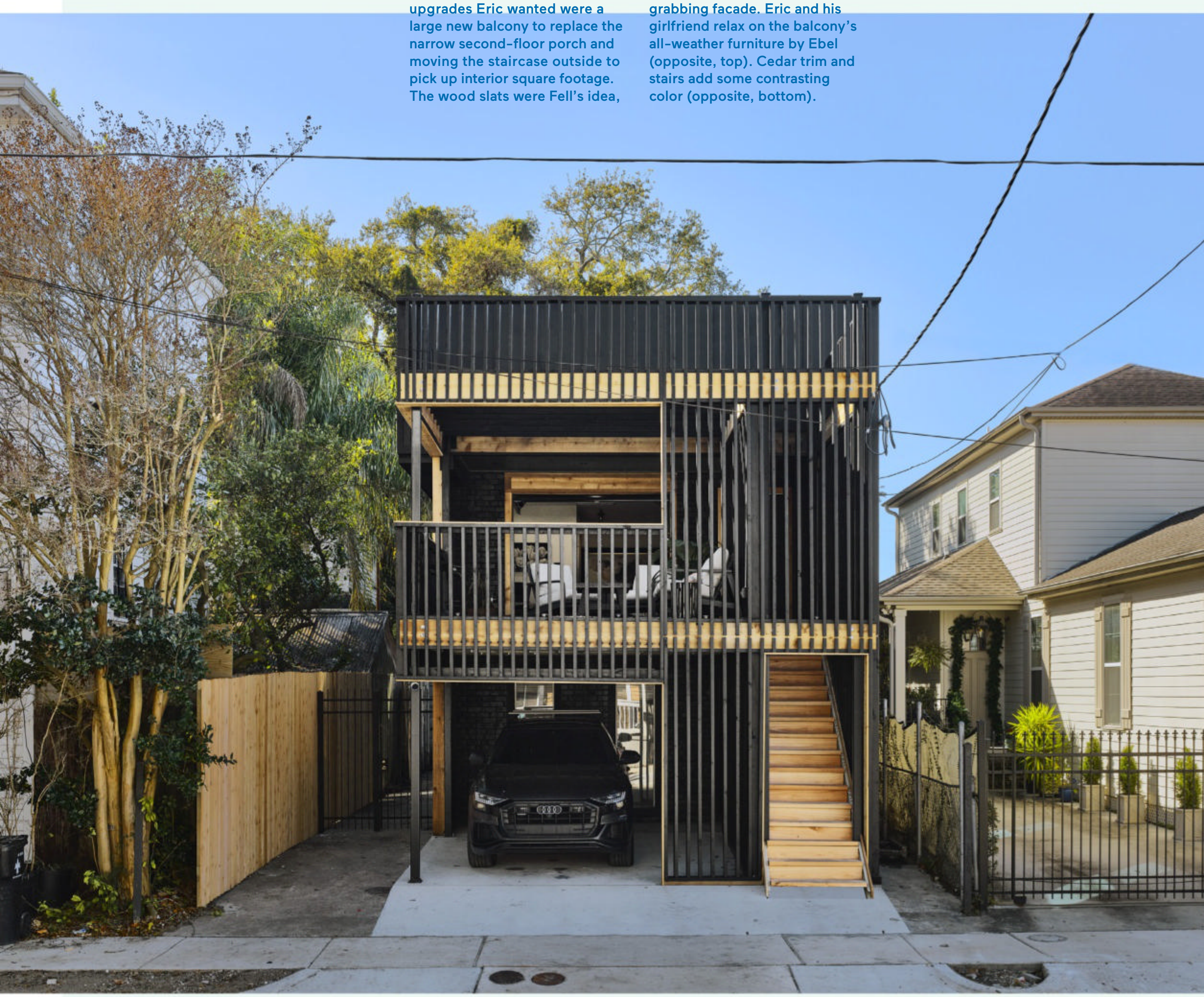
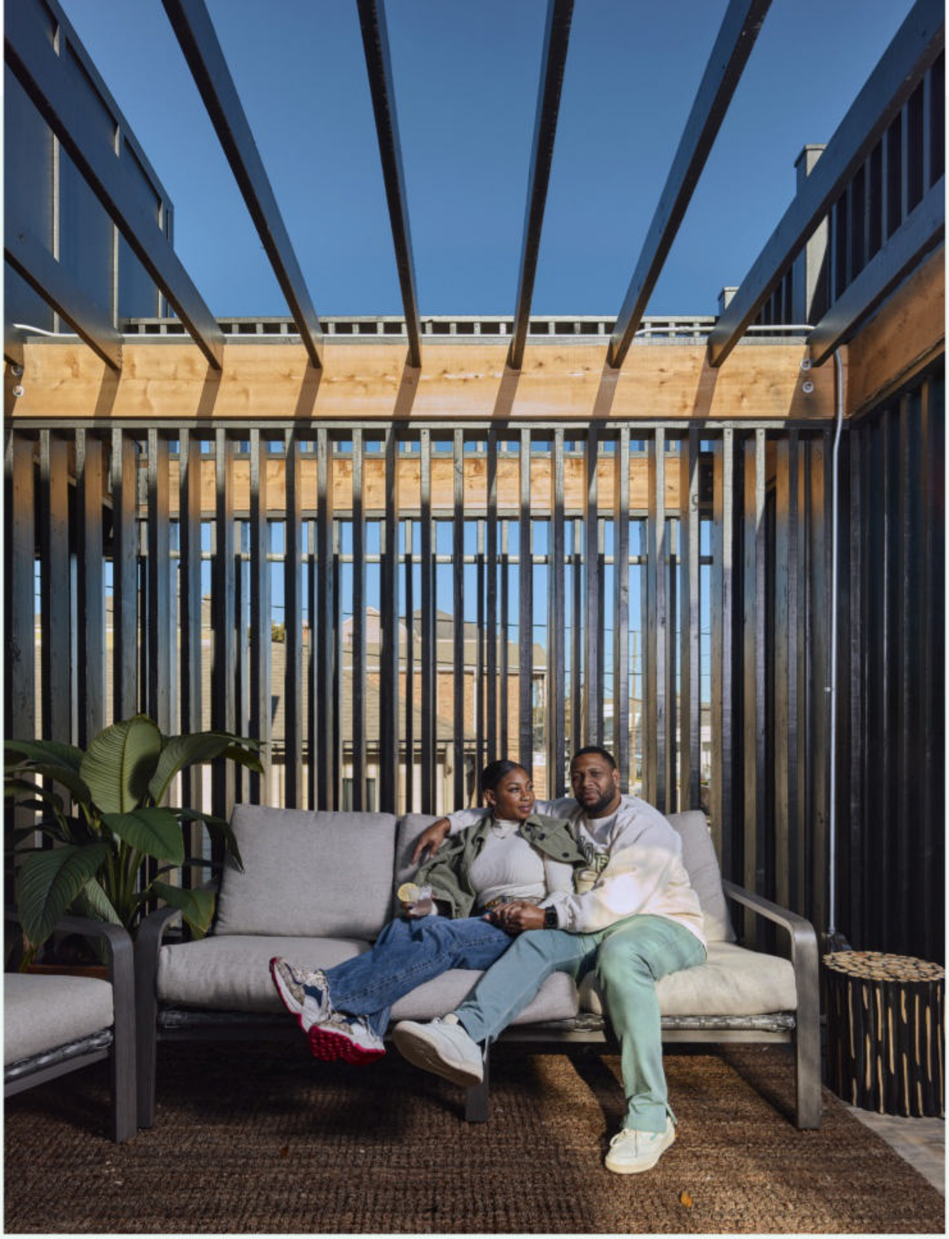
New Orleans native Eric Roland revamped a dated duplex just outside one of the city's historic districts with the help of local architect Nathan Fell. Among the upgrades Eric wanted were a large new balcony to replace the narrow second-floor porch and moving the staircase outside to pick up interior square footage. The wood slats were Fell's idea, which Eric immediately jumped on. Depending on the angle, they provide a degree of privacy and shade, not to mention giving the home its attention-grabbing facade. Eric and his girlfriend relax on the balcony's all-weather furniture by Ebel (opposite, top). Cedar trim and stairs add some contrasting color (opposite, bottom).



The Big Screen A strategic renovation with a striated wood facade suits a New Orleans homeowner's contemporary taste.

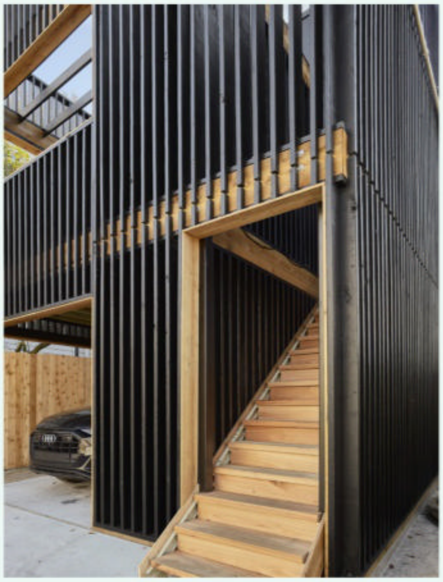


TEXT BY
Stephen Zacks

PHOTOS BY | @JEREMYJACHYM
Jeremy Jachym

Eric Roland doesn't mind being a little contrarian. "People love historic New Orleans charm, and I'm not saying I hate it," says the longtime resident of the city. "But it's not my favorite." That was clear back in 2021, when he was on the hunt for a two-family home that he could turn into an owner-occupied house with a rental apartment. He found a two-story, two-unit brick building just a block and a half from streetcar-lined St. Charles Avenue and the stately Garden District. The gable-sided home with a half-moon attic window had been a characteristically neglected rental owned by an absentee landlord. The structure was perfect, but the style? "I'm on the younger spectrum, so it's kind of the old school/new school divide going on," Eric says. "I like clean lines. I don't like anything circular. I even hated the gable roof."

Nevertheless, he paid $495,000 for the roughly 2,500-square-foot building and started to form a vision for the place. An entrepreneur who owns a courier service as well as a fashion start-up and a screen-printing and embroidery company, Eric had a few specific ideas in mind: First, he wanted to install a glass-paneled garage door on the second floor that would open to a balcony, allowing for a style of fluid indoor/outdoor living fitting for the warm New Orleans climate. Second, he wanted to bring the stairs outside, removing the ›



indoor stairway to free up interior square footage for the apartments.

Searching for a designer to figure out how to make the transformation a reality, Eric found Nathan Fell and realized he had been gobsmacked by another house he had happened to come across earlier that was designed by the architect. The two jelled immediately. “There’s thinking that you are a tastemaker because you have an Instagram account, and then there’s actually having good insight for how things work together,” Fell says of Eric. Armed with a roughly $50,000 budget, Fell found a way to create two apartments with the owner’s unit on the ground floor (left untouched during the project) and a renovated rental with the desired balcony, on the second. He also brought unity to the facade by adding the home’s signature, a black wooden screen that encloses the stair on one side and the balcony on the other.

They got it done because two factors were on their side. The house fell just outside a historic district, which meant fewer hoops to jump through during the renovation than with a building protected by the city’s notoriously strict preservation laws. It also had a protruding porch—with awkwardly oversize Greek Revival details—added in the 1980s that the two were sure no one would miss.

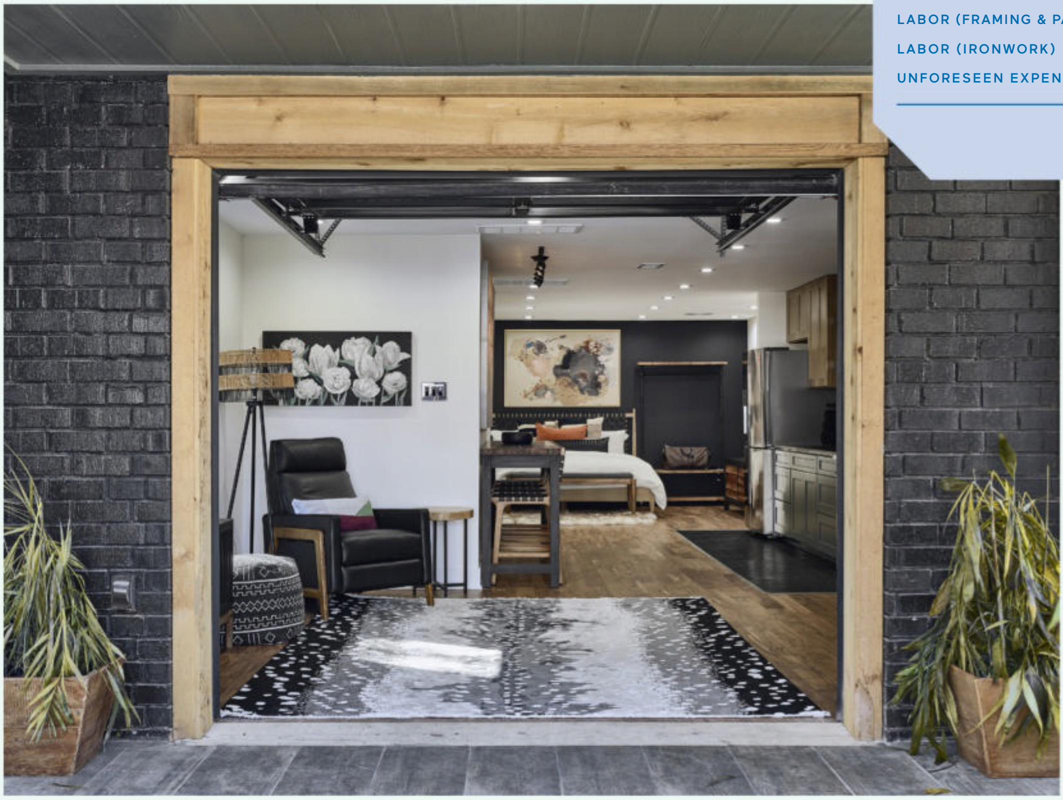
Eric maxed out a $25,000 credit card on materials and put his own labor into painting and demolition to stay within his budget, though contractors had to be hired to install steel stringers and posts for the porch structure, frame the wood, and pour a new concrete foundation for the addition. By the time the renovation was completed, Eric had moved into his girlfriend’s house, so he rented out the finished second-floor apartment on Airbnb to pay down the construction costs and save money to renovate the ground-floor unit, where he plans to live.

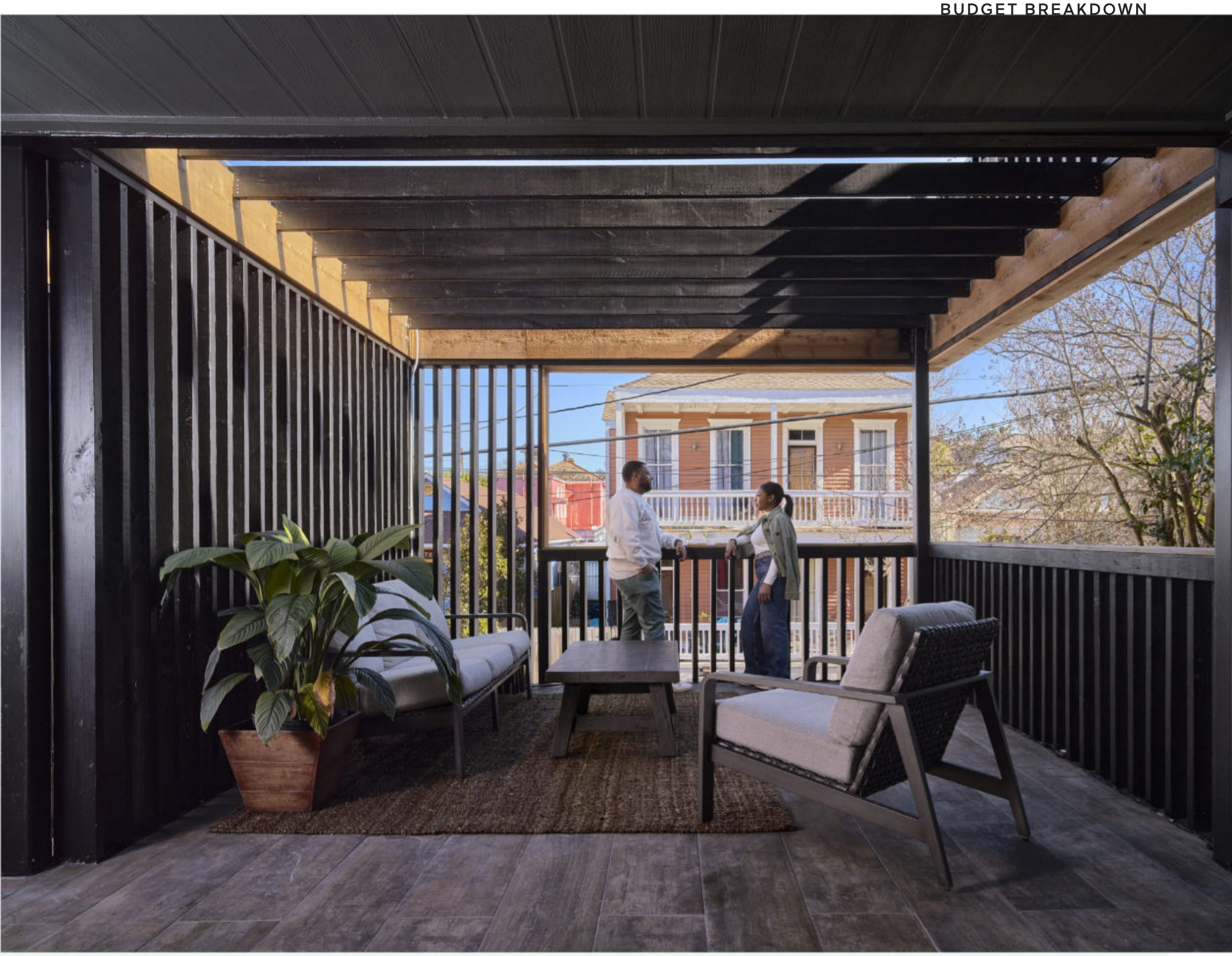
The next phase may take a while, but Eric has already achieved one thing: hiding the original roofline. “When you look at it, the screen gives you the illusion that the house is squared all the way through,” he says. “The gable was going to kill me if I had to look at it on a regular basis. It was just gonna kill me.” ■

> **“If I had a dollar for everyone who told me how beautiful the house is, I’d probably have made back my renovation money by now.”**
>
> **ERIC ROLAND, HOMEOWNER**

BUDGET

FOUNDATION	$	7,000
TREATED LUMBER	$	15,000
PAINT	$	1,000
METAL STRINGERS	$	2,500
CEDAR LUMBER	$	3,000
STEEL POST	$	2,000
WOOD CONNECTORS	$	1,500
NAILS, SCREWS, ETC.	$	500
LABOR (FRAMING & PAINT)	$	15,000
LABOR (IRONWORK)	$	2,000
UNFORESEEN EXPENSES	$	6,000
		$55,500





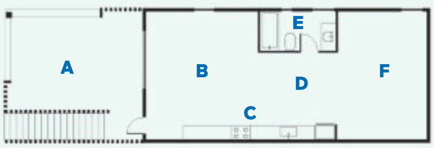
At the top of Eric's "must" list was a windowed garage door connecting the living area and the new balcony (opposite). "I wanted this garage door so bad," he says. "The whole design was really based around it as a cool way to create an indoor/outdoor feel." Openings in the balcony slats offer unobstructed views of the neighborhood (above). "The idea was to have little picture frames within the space so that it didn't seem completely enclosed," says Fell.

ILLUSTRATION: LOHNES+WRIGHT

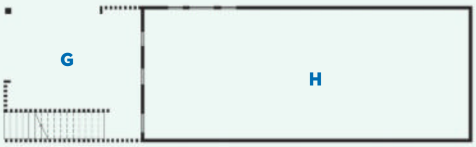
Moiré Noir

N

ARCHITECT **Nathan Fell Architecture**
LOCATION **New Orleans, Louisiana**



Second Floor



First Floor

A Balcony
B Living Area
C Kitchen
D Dining Area
E Bathroom
F Bedroom
G Parking Area
H Owner's Unit

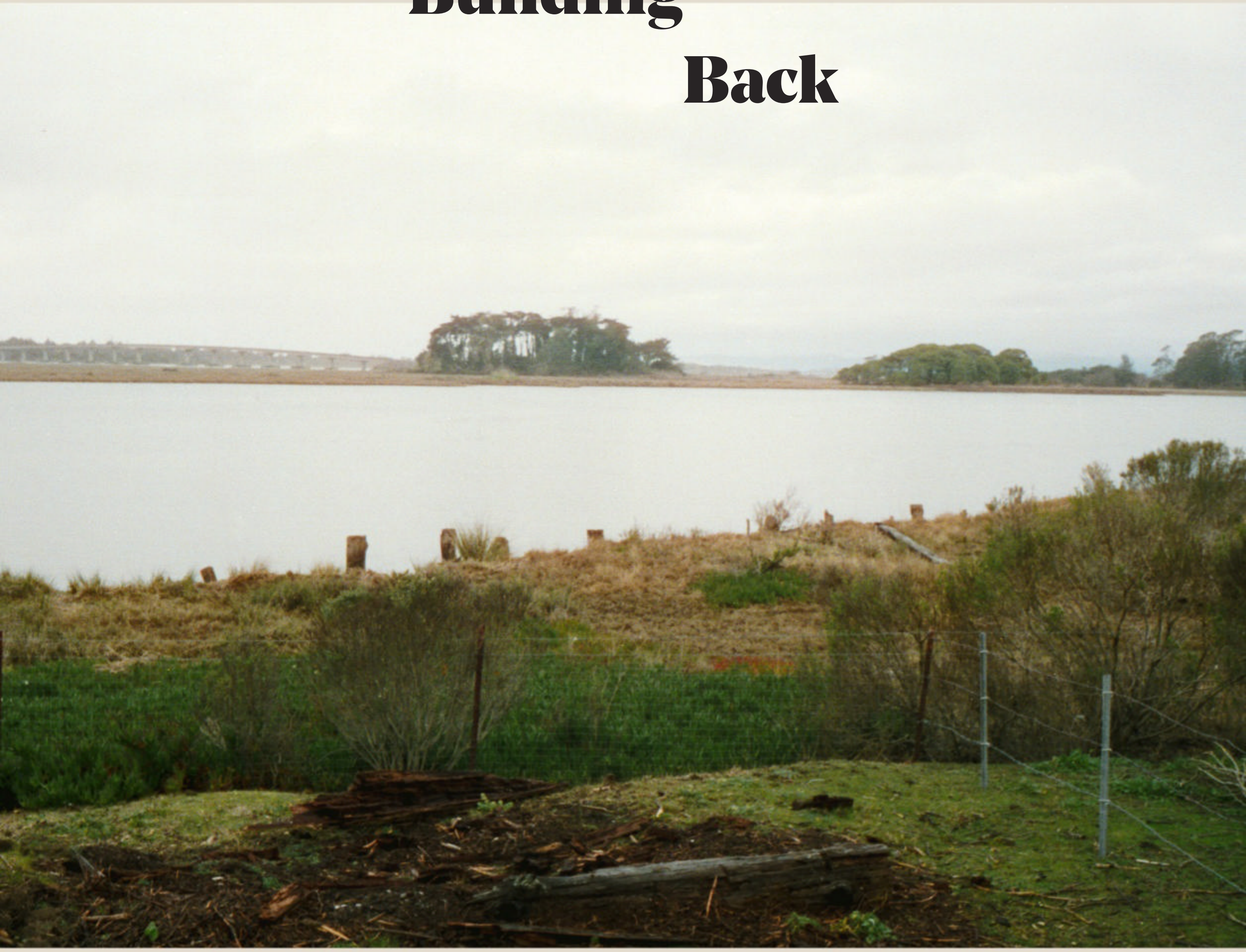
TEXT AND PHOTOS BY | @KALENGOODLUCK

Kalen Goodluck

Piece by piece, the Wiyot Tribe has been reassembling its ancestral territories in Northern California. Now, it's using a land trust to create affordable housing so its community can stay.

On the coast north of San Francisco around Eureka, California, the Wiyot Tribe has spent decades reclaiming its ancestral lands. Tribal chair Ted Hernandez (above and below) and tribal administrator Michelle Vassel (above) are leading the effort, monitoring land in the area, like this former village site (above). In 2019, the tribe finally regained control of Tuluwat Island (right, in distance), the site of a massacre of Wiyot people in 1860 and the center of the tribe's universe.

Building Back



In early February, a light rain sprinkles across the windshield of Michelle Vassel's forest green Prius, an official vehicle of the Wiyot Tribe. She's driving south along the CA-255 bridge toward Eureka, a coastal city in Northern California, passing Tuluwat Island. Ted Hernandez, chair of the Wiyot Tribe, sits in the passenger seat, observing the island—the sacred cultural center of the tribe's cosmological universe. He and Vassel, the tribal administrator, are surveying the ancestral lands the tribe has recovered in the last 20 years.

In the evenings, Vassel says, some unhoused people walk north across the two-lane bridge to make camp or find shelter on one of the islands in the middle of the bay or farther north in Samoa, a forested peninsula across the waters. They then walk back to Eureka the next day for social services.

Tuluwat Island sits in what is now Humboldt Bay. Many Wiyot people lived on the island until 1860. That year, a group of white settlers interrupted the Wiyot Tribe's World Renewal Ceremony on the island, killing scores of Wiyot people, mostly women, children, and elders—an act so vicious, it earned the city the nickname Murderville by newspapers in San Francisco and New York. Afterward, the bay was full of blood, Vassel says. For more than 150 years, the island remained out of Wiyot hands until the tribe began purchasing it piece by piece in 1999. Now, the tribe owns most of the island and has created a historic connection with the people of Eureka.

"This has been an intergenerational movement to heal the island, to heal our people, to heal our community. Today we make history together," Hernandez said at a news conference among Eureka's city leaders the day the last land was returned in 2019. "We changed their story." >

Stable, long-term housing in Eureka (above), as in the rest of California, is increasingly out of reach for many. That's why Vassel and others started the Dishgamu Humboldt Community Land Trust, which is creating permanently affordable housing on land under Wiyot tribal control around the city.

"I like to think I just happened to be one of the lucky ones that was alive and here when that happened," says Vassel. "But, you know, work had been done for generations getting to that point."

While returning land to tribes is a major achievement, it isn't a silver bullet solution to the many problems facing the Wiyot and other tribes across the country. Even when land is returned, many Native people still can't afford to live close by, something especially true in California, where in January the overall median home price exceeded $751,000, according to the California Association of Realtors.

"Our people are being priced out of the local housing market, so just think about that, the depth of that," says Vassel. "The people that have been here for hundreds of thousands of years can't afford to live here anymore—and that's happening all across California in Indian Country."

So the Wiyot Tribe is not stopping at just getting land back. After years of preparation, in February 2020, it took the historic step of creating the first community land trust (CLT) developed under tribal law in the United States.

CLTs are nonprofit development corporations representing residents of a certain area. The trusts use private and public funds to acquire and manage land on behalf of their constituents to create things like public amenities or housing. Residents can own or rent housing on CLT land but cannot own the land and usually live on CLT property using ground leases, which often last 99 years. Perhaps the most beneficial part of a CLT is that when a trust buys the land, the land permanently leaves the market and the CLT is able to keep rental or mortgage rates low on its housing units. The first community land trust in the U.S. was founded by civil rights advocate Robert Swann in 1970 to give Black sharecroppers an opportunity to collectively own the land they worked. As of 2021, there were over 260 CLTs across the country, according to the Georgetown Climate Center.

Vassel says the tribe founded the Dishgamu (pronounced DISH-gah-muh, meaning "love") Humboldt Community Land Trust to create sustainable, affordable housing for members of the Wiyot Tribe and other residents of the area and to reintroduce public green space to the city's urban and industrial areas. The trust seeks to develop projects on the tribe's ancestral homelands by using regenerative economic principles that follow less extractive and more environmentally and socially positive business models, like restoring and repurposing older, underused buildings. Every proposed project, land acquisition, community program, grant application, and conservation plan must receive tribal council approval. The fledgling land trust is an experiment in tribal leadership and management—there's no blueprint for this kind of organization and ownership. Tribal leaders see it as an opportunity for healing between the Wiyot and Eureka communities and a way to provide responsible land stewardship during a time of crisis for many seeking affordable housing in California's out-of-control market.

"I think society has forgotten how to take care of its people," says Hernandez.

—

Sipping tea around a table in downtown Eureka's historic Sarah Carson House, Vassel and Hernandez are joined by David Cobb and Kristen Crooks, advancement manager and project manager, respectively, for Dishgamu Humboldt. Crooks wears a baseball cap stating, "You Are On Native Land." They are surrounded by long velvet window drapes and hardwood floors, and a staircase down the hall has a curved wooden banister—relatively lavish styling for what will be affordable housing. Once a house catering to Airbnb tourists, then an end-of-life care center during the Covid quarantine, and now an asset of the land trust, the Sarah Carson House, more than 160 years old, will soon board unhoused youths while they find their footing. During a tour, Cobb gets excited over the prospect of a child or young adult leaving a precarious situation to live in not only a safe space but one with such fanciful, Victorian excess.

In late 2022, Dishgamu Humboldt received a $14 million grant from the State of California to create this transitional housing, affording the organization the funds to acquire the Sarah Carson House plus another, nonhistoric Victorian home and a commercial office building in downtown Eureka, a stone's throw from the bridge to Tuluwat Island. Tentatively named the Jaroujiji Youth Housing Project, the endeavor is at the heart of the trust's current plans.

Cobb first met Vassel before the pandemic while campaigning for the city's return of Tuluwat Island to the Wiyot Tribe and organizing rallies to save the sacred site Tsakiyuwit, on Bear River Ridge south of Eureka, from a wind farm developer. Then, during 2020's Covid-related supply shortages, the two were putting together personal protective equipment packages to distribute to the community when Vassel had an idea. "She said, 'David, we keep showing up for each other in reaction to things,'" Cobb recalls. "'What would it look like if we imagined proactively, you know, doing something?'" The pair began researching how a tribally led land trust could serve the community.

The Sarah Carson House is a modest manor painted baby blue and pastel pink and encircled by a white picket fence and pristinely manicured garden of flowers, berries, and rosebushes. Each of the five fully furnished bedrooms has a gilded placard showing a name like Bohemian Bliss. Because of historic building codes, the house will have minimal remodeling done. It's a small and locally loved fixture of Eureka history, one redolent of westward Anglo expansion, booming timber extraction, and gold rush mania. But outside its picket fence, the land and people tell a different story.

The United States settler-colonial project's centuries of war, massacres, and military and settler encroachments resulted in countless land grabs that left tribes with less than 2 percent of their historical lands within the contiguous United States. Since then, tribal nations have campaigned to recover their ancestral territories. But reversing the theft of Indian land is no easy feat.

After the 1860 massacre, Tuluwat Island operated as a dry dock and a ship-repair site for nearly 120 years. Throughout that time, the Wiyot Tribe was effectively landless. Tribal members temporarily lived on reservations in Klamath, to the north, until a church group purchased 20 acres south of Eureka for some remaining homeless Wiyot people in the early 1900s, creating what is now known as the Old Reservation. The Wiyot village on Tuluwat fell into disrepair, and toxic chemicals from the dry dock bled into the soil. Hunks of metal littered the ground. In 1961, the federal government terminated the Wiyot tribal status, ending any recognizable tribal sovereignty and protection in the eyes of the U.S. government, but the tribe regained its federal recognition in 1981 after filing a suit for unlawful termination. Then, in 2000, the tribe bought 1.5 acres of the contaminated site on the island and began cleaning them up itself.

Recovering land doesn't just happen. Although it's not unheard of for generous individuals or families to donate or cheaply sell their properties back to tribal nations, most of the time, tribes must exhaustively negotiate, campaign, or lobby for the return of their lands. Often, it is a decades-long, even centuries-long, endeavor. Tribal land acquisitions accelerated throughout Indian Country after the passage of 1988's Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, which allowed tribes to erect casinos on reservation territory and enjoy a new stream of revenue to fund their governmental services. But the Wiyot Tribe has no casino and funds its government largely through grants. Members of the tribe have spent decades extending their hands, showing Eureka residents good faith and winning them over to achieve the tribe's goals. "There's lots of people that came out and helped," says Crooks. "And those people became our strong allies," adds Hernandez.

Vassel and Hernandez say they were taken under the wing of former tribal chairwoman Cheryl Seidner, who put on art sales and musicals to raise over $100,000 and purchase the initial 1.5 acres on the >

The historic Sarah Carson House (above) is one of three underused buildings in Eureka that will be turned into transitional shelter as part of the land trust's initial Jaroujiji Youth Housing Project.

island. "The whole community participated in getting the money for us because they bought our T-shirts," says Vassel. "Maybe they bought a watch, maybe they showed up at a concert, or maybe you're an artist and you donated a piece of art, but a lot of people in this community helped raise that money by participating in some way." As public support grew, the tribe led the cleanup of the property and held annual community candlelit vigils to help heal the long-ignored and shame-filled history between the city and the Wiyot people.

In 2004, Eureka deeded the Wiyot Tribe 40 acres surrounding the 1.5-acre island lot, the first land returned voluntarily by a U.S. city to a tribe, instead of via litigation, lawsuit, or court order. Meanwhile, the Wiyot Tribe's ecological restoration continued. In 2013, the tribe received a Superfund grant from the Environmental Protection Agency, which agreed to work with the tribe to remediate the soil and restore the village site, as well as hire cultural monitors to supervise the cleanup.

Finally, in 2019, the city returned over 200 acres on Tuluwat to the Wiyot Tribe.

—

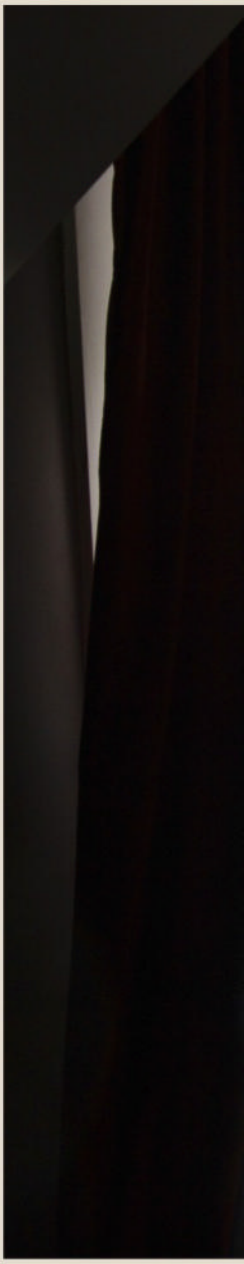
The commercial office building that's part of the Jaroujiji project has a funky mansard roof with large wooden shingles, an obvious sign of 1970s construction. The road in front of it is an on-ramp, with cars driving to and from the bay bridge that crosses Tuluwat Island. Down the street, a woman set up shop next to a gas station, selling flowers under a canopy tent, while some city residents are walking the street, looking for shelter from the rain.

Remodeling of this and the two other buildings is on hold until likely this fall as Dishgamu Humboldt works with Uxo Architects, a worker-owned architecture and design firm, to draw up plans for 39 bedroom units across the sites, accompanied by plenty of green space and common areas for the residents, as well as offices for behavioral health practitioners. Replacing a parking lot, a Native medicinal and food garden will bond the commercial building and the third building, the non-historic Victorian.

The Victorian is also being remodeled to provide housing. Rather than focusing on new construction, the Jaroujiji project is much more about repurposing older buildings and outfitting them with upgraded appliances and heating-and-cooling systems.

"One of our major philosophies is not cutting down or getting rid of green space in order to develop land when there's tons of properties right here in already developed land that need love," Vassel tells me. "Some of them, like the [commercial building]—that's an old business building that's got no life right now, and there's a lot of them around that are empty." The only new construction planned is for two small ADUs, one behind each Victorian.

"There's this idea of returning love to unloved spaces," says Alice Armstrong, an architect at Uxo, over a video call in early February. "We think it's really important that a project like this avoids maybe some



Kristen Crooks, program manager at Dishgamu Humboldt, stands in the garden of the Sarah Carson House (left). The garden will serve as a space for youths to connect with nature—a respite from the city's sea of parking lots with minimal greenery.

> “I think society has forgotten how to take care of its people.”
>
> TED HERNANDEZ, WIYOT TRIBE CHAIR

Dishgamu Humboldt’s advancement manager, David Cobb, and Crooks survey a richly decorated bedroom in the Sarah Carson House (above) that will provide a home for youths needing shelter.

Dishgamu Humboldt will also convert an empty commercial building (above) in Eureka by the bridge to Tuluwat Island and another Victorian in the city (below left), in addition to the Sarah Carson House (below right). Uxo Architects is working with the land trust on sustainable designs to adapt the structures into housing that will foster a sense of community.

pitfalls of leaning toward more carceral environments or more controlling environments. We would really like to counter that kind of status quo that we've seen in some other projects."

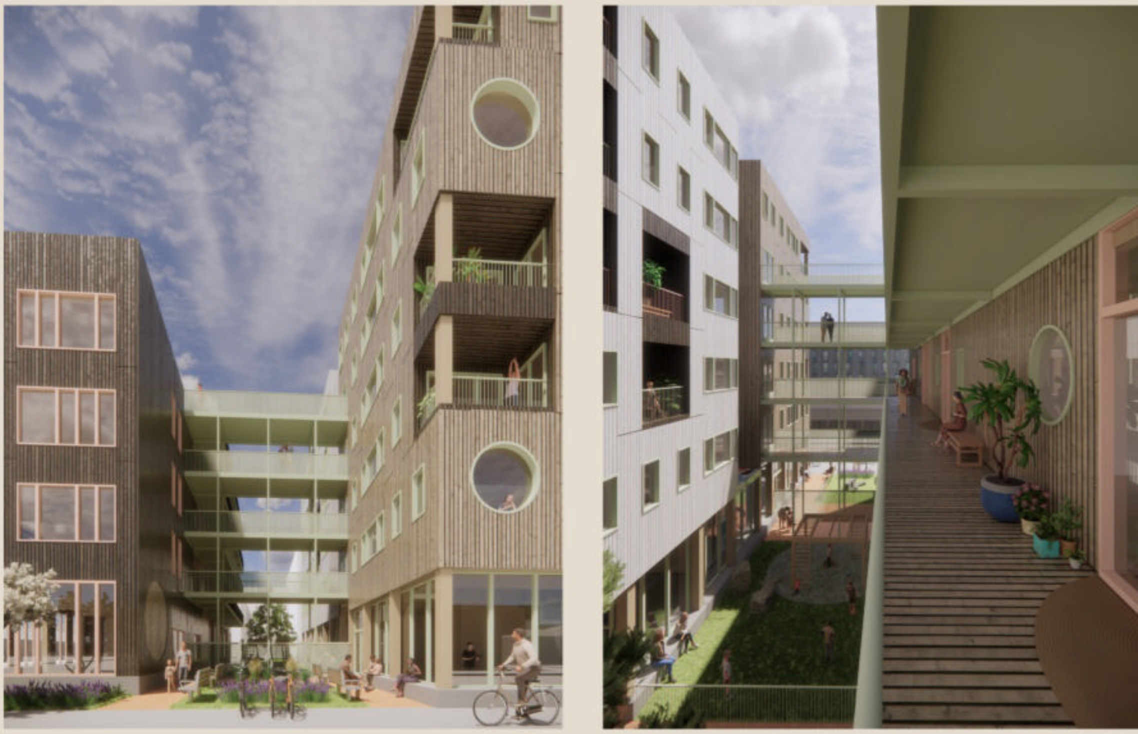
The units will accommodate children ages 15 through 17, as well as young adults ages 18 to 25, many of whom need more life skills and are just getting out on their own. (By law, these age groups must be separated, so their units will not intermingle.) As Vassel notes, there are extended state foster care programs for those aging out of the system at 18 and assistance to get them an apartment, but the waiting lists are usually long. Others may not have a job or adequate income to rent an apartment. A student living in a car while taking classes at the nearby College of the Redwoods could need something safer, while another may not want to go to a different city for services. A Jaroujiji case manager will work with each youth to create an individualized plan that meets specific wellness and cultural goals and needs by assisting with things like housing or making a job-hunt plan, which could help them stay integrated with their community.

"If you go anywhere around town, you can see there's a need in our community," says Vassel. "We know that in our county, there's no real services for children who have had a lot of trauma in their life and end up in the foster care system or even with extended family."

Most Wiyot youth, she says, who require in-depth mental or behavioral healthcare and temporary housing services have to

go to cities hundreds of miles away, like Santa Rosa or San Francisco. “To get these younger generations interested, we have plenty of [Wiyot tribal] departments that can take them in as interns so they can learn a skill and then maybe they’ll get interested and say, ‘Hey, I like being a tribal preservation officer. I’m going to go to school for this. I’m going to go to college,’ ” says Hernandez.

Vassel and her colleagues say that the Jaroujiji project is about returning care and love to the area and its people. It’s part of the Wiyot Tribe’s mission as an environmental and social steward of the region, and it is not acting alone.



After identifying a desire for higher-density housing in local community engagement sessions, Uxo Architects and Dishgamu Humboldt designed mass timber, multifamily affordable buildings (right) as a thought experiment for what the future of Eureka could look like.

Uxo Architects began working with Dishgamu Humboldt in 2021, assisting with the trust’s state grant application for the youth housing project and other grants and conducting research on sustainable building materials for prospective affordable-housing projects in Eureka. The land trust and architects seek to engage with the Wiyot Tribe’s cultural department to see how tribal values and culture could map onto architectural plans. Questions like “How does this project work responsibly within the limits of the land?” are guiding how Dishgamu Humboldt leaders articulate their vision. Animals and the rest of the natural environment are stakeholders in their projects, so what does it mean to steward the land in a considerate way for all of them? All-electric appliances, on-site solar energy generation, and other sustainable technologies are all being considered for Jaroujiji and potential future projects. Uxo and Dishgamu Humboldt also designed a conceptual model for a six-story, mass timber, multifamily affordable-housing project in Eureka that could use reclaimed forest products for its structure at some point in the future.

“We’re still parsing those connections and opportunities to push this idea of green construction further than the industry is seeing it right now, and part of that has to do with material choices, supply chains, using local materials wherever possible,” says Ashton Hamm, founder and architect at Uxo. “Site-planning strategies are a big part of that in terms of maximizing natural ventilation, natural daylight—passive strategies rather than really technology-centric strategies that tend to end up mired in a lot of extractive practices along their supply chains.”

While the land trust is busy with the youth housing project, and Tuluwat Island rests gently in Wiyot care, the tribe has been working on returning another Wiyot village site to its stewardship: a wooded area along the coast in Samoa, the peninsula across the bay from Eureka. With its access to the beachfront, the space will help the Wiyot gather food from the bay. Recovering land doesn’t end, and neither does reclaiming culture.

Looking out at Tuluwat Island from Eureka, Vassel and Hernandez recall a former owner of the island who was trying to build a ranch on it, boating cows over, even though there would be no source of drinking water and ocean tides sometimes submerge most of the island. The ranch didn’t work out, but it did start an erosion process on the island’s northern end. “It’s the natural world—it has a balance to it,” says Vassel. Hernandez agreed. From where they stood, the site of the annual candlelit vigil for those lost in the 1860 Wiyot massacre, they could see a rainbow had formed. ■

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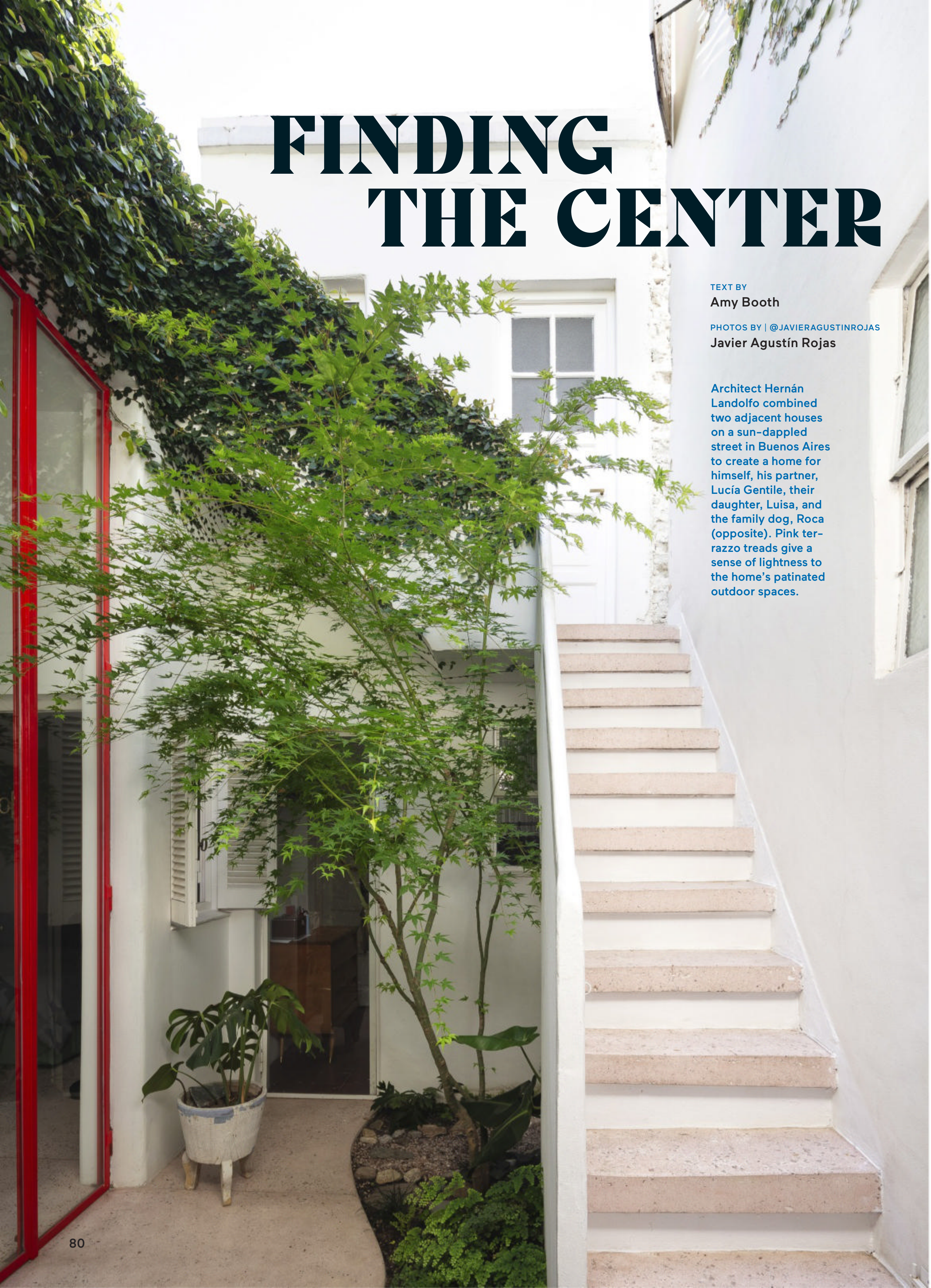


FINDING THE CENTER

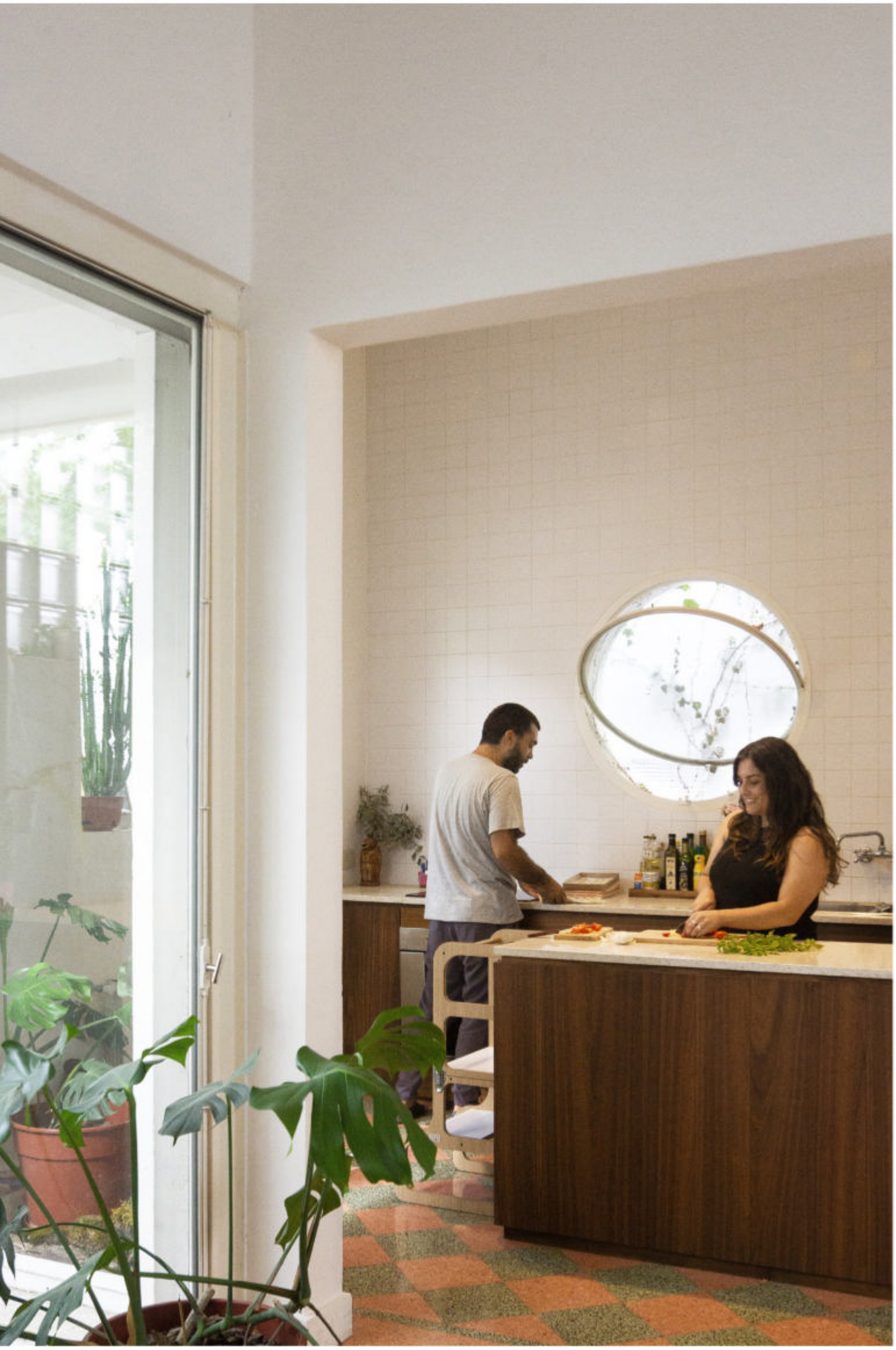
TEXT BY
Amy Booth

PHOTOS BY | @JAVIERAGUSTINROJAS
Javier Agustín Rojas

Architect Hernán Landolfo combined two adjacent houses on a sun-dappled street in Buenos Aires to create a home for himself, his partner, Lucía Gentile, their daughter, Luisa, and the family dog, Roca (opposite). Pink terrazzo treads give a sense of lightness to the home's patinated outdoor spaces.

An architect riffs on the winding streets of his neighborhood to turn a set of shopworn buildings into a layered, comfortably raw single-family home.

Vines climb along the frame of a new circular window in the kitchen (below). The pink and green floor tiles are original. At one end of the living room (opposite), tall glass doors lead to an interior garden and one of the four openings—in this case more of a crack—that Hernán made between the houses. "It's Luisa's favorite place to hide when we play hide-and-seek," he says.



The Buenos Aires neighborhood of Parque Chas is a labyrinth. A verdant series of concentric circles morphing into squares toward its outer edges, the area has a spoke-and-wheel layout that keeps taxi drivers out for fear of getting lost. Cars thundering along the surrounding avenues don't bother trying to take the area's lanes as shortcuts.

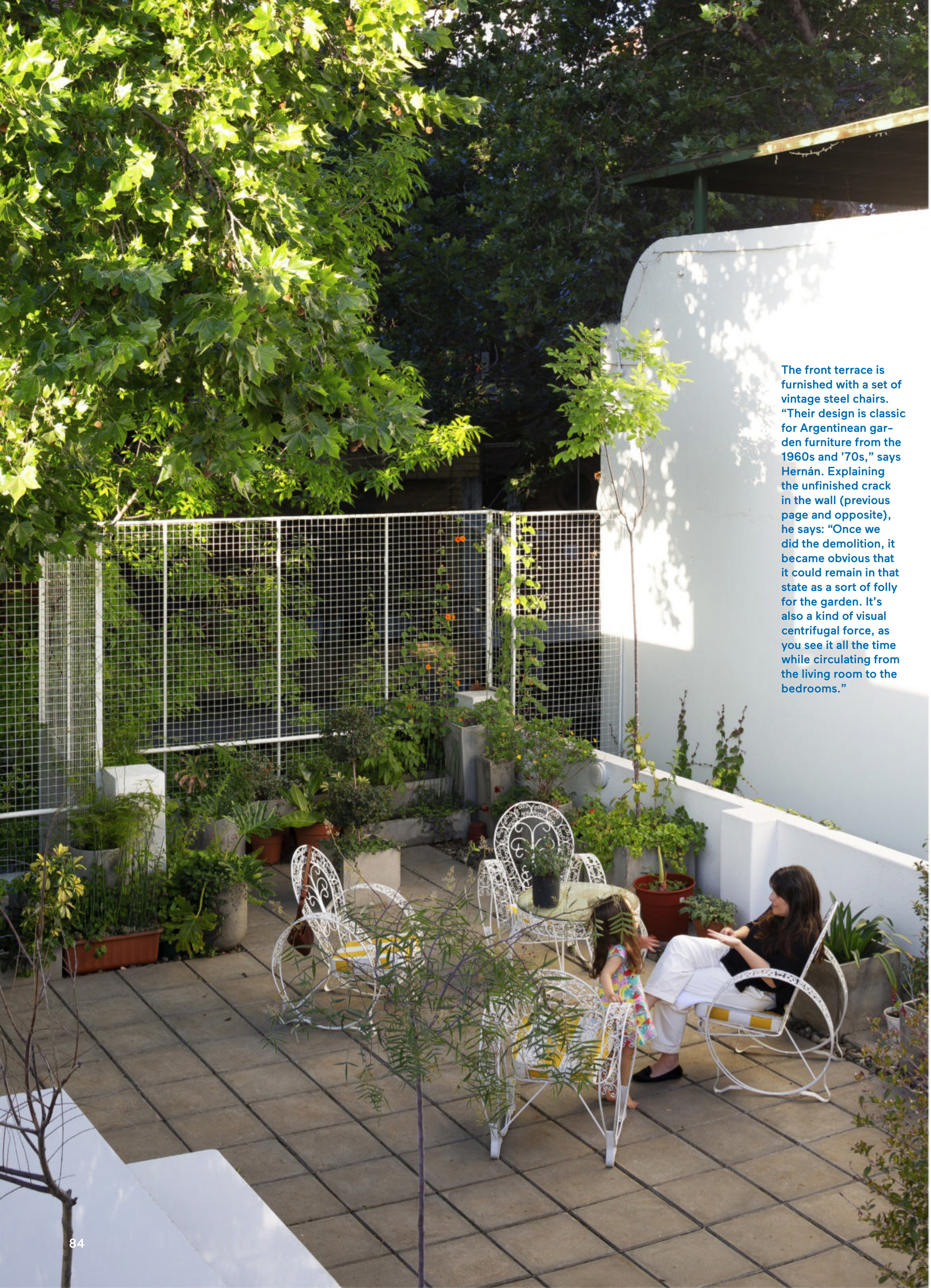
To Hernán Landolfo, it was perfect. The 39-year-old architect was living in a small house at the time, but when he and his partner, Lucía Gentile, had their daughter, Luisa, now four, they knew they would need more space. So, in 2018, they bought something larger in Parque Chas and moved in the following spring.

The space Hernán found was not one house, but two *propiedades horizontales,* where two 1950s brick homes butted up against each other. (PHs, as they're known in Buenos Aires, are a common arrangement.) His family would have all the space they needed by simply combining the two. The challenge, then, was to join the existing structures with minimal intervention.

"In Buenos Aires they destroy old houses," says Hernán. "It's like the natural path of all these houses is to be knocked down and turned into three-story buildings. There was something nostalgic—I don't know how to explain it—a little quixotic about, What can we do if we don't touch it?"

The homes were typical of the '50s, with brick construction, vaulted ceilings, wooden details, and mosaic-tile floors. Hernán painted the walls white and added simple, elegant furniture, lending the spaces a minimalist touch without obscuring the property's historic look and feel. He installed steel-framed windows and doors at the front of the property and kept the original ones to use elsewhere in the home—a decision that was as much economic as aesthetic. He also kept the dusky-pink and gray-green harlequin tiles in the kitchen. The effect is as if eras are layered on top of each other.

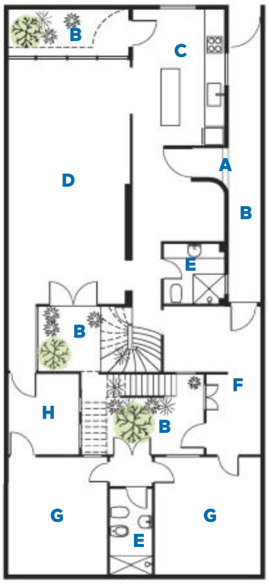
"It's richer when you add, or absorb, the variable of time," says Hernán, surveying the mix of old and new in his kitchen. "It ›



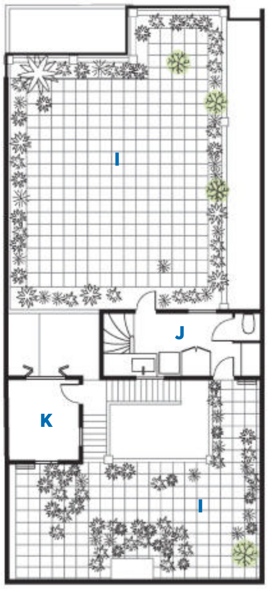
The front terrace is furnished with a set of vintage steel chairs. “Their design is classic for Argentinean garden furniture from the 1960s and ’70s,” says Hernán. Explaining the unfinished crack in the wall (previous page and opposite), he says: “Once we did the demolition, it became obvious that it could remain in that state as a sort of folly for the garden. It’s also a kind of visual centrifugal force, as you see it all the time while circulating from the living room to the bedrooms.”

Ginebra

ARCHITECT **Hernán Landolfo**
LOCATION **Buenos Aires, Argentina**



Lower Level



Upper Level

A	Entrance
B	Patio
C	Kitchen
D	Living/Dining Area
E	Bathroom
F	Playroom
G	Bedroom
H	Walk-In Closet
I	Terrace
J	Storage/ Laundry Room
K	Studio

ILLUSTRATION: LOHNES+WRIGHT

gives it its own personality.... Someone made this place with love."

To create a single residence, Hernán made four openings in the thick internal wall dividing the two units. He also made a triangular cut in a wall in what used to be one of the home's kitchens but is now Luisa's playroom, allowing the family to move between spaces more easily. For privacy, Hernán closed off the entry to the home along the street and preserved the one to the house at the rear that's accessed via a side passage.

Parque Chas's mazelike nature influenced the house's redesign, he says. The concept of a labyrinth was doubly >

significant: As well as referring to the neighborhood's tangled streets, it is the title of a short-story collection by famed Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges. The house is on Ginebra Street (Spanish for Geneva, the city where Borges is buried).

"There's something with the theme of the labyrinth that it was fun to see how it could permeate the work," Hernán says. "The objective of the space is that at least the first time that someone comes in, they get lost."

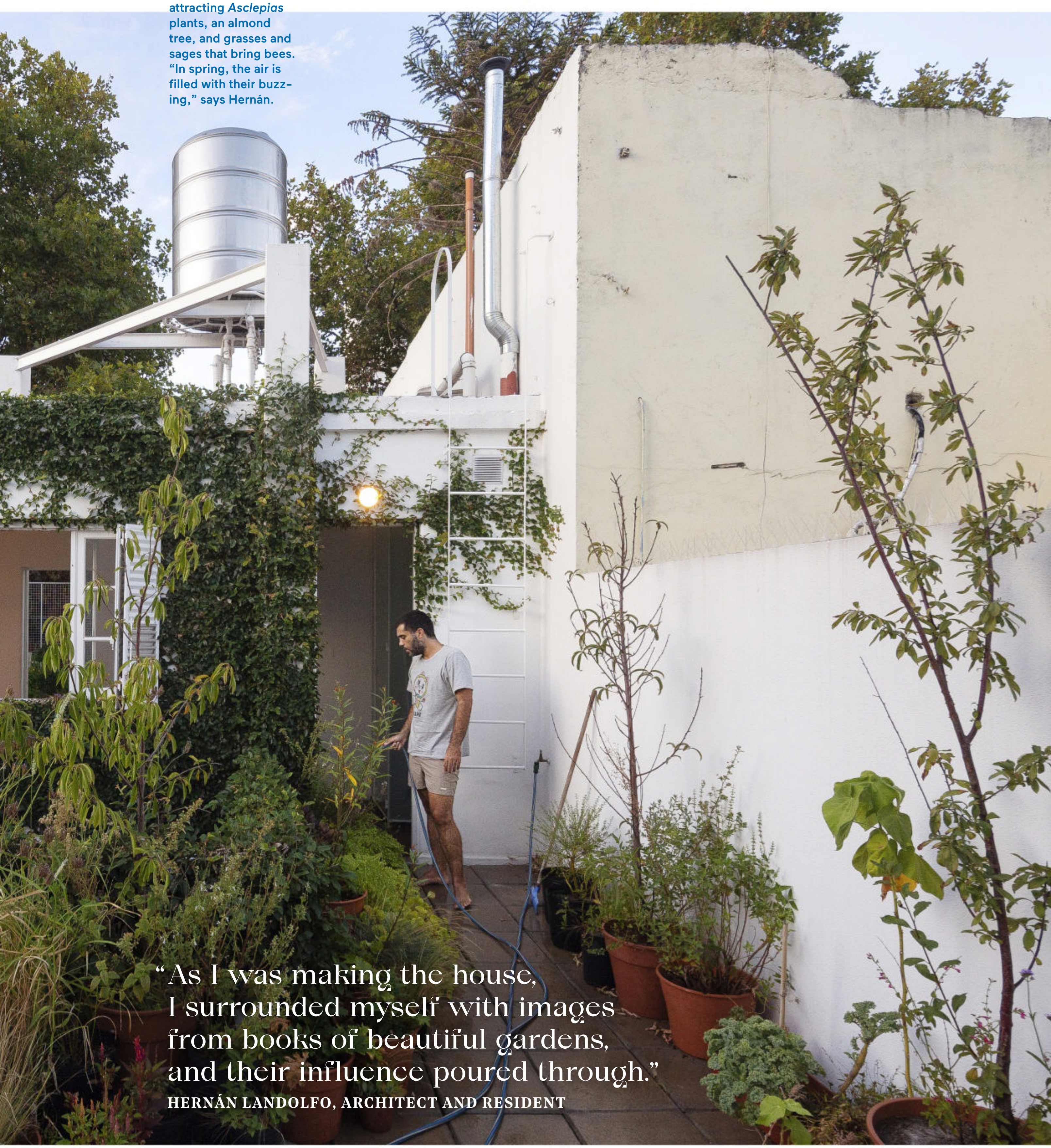
Placed across the property are patios that Hernán turned into gardens, with benches positioned in some for orchestrated views that make the spaces feel expansive. Along the right-hand wall of the property, Hernán installed a mirror. Open to the sky and reflecting the inner patio, it creates an illusion of extra room so effectively that friends have walked directly into it, according to Lucía.

Adding greenery was the couple's way of starting to make the space their own when permits for other parts of the work were stymied by the pandemic. During lockdown, Hernán took inspiration from the BBC show *Gardeners' World*. "It was partly about bringing nature home, too," adds Lucía. "When we arrived, all the patios were dry, and there wasn't any kind of greenery."

The property has two rooftop terraces, one for each original PH. They're separated by a second-story laundry room, and when its windows are open, you can see through from one to the other. The couple have a grill on the front roof terrace, to which they have recently started inviting friends for *asados* (Argentina's beloved barbecues). Here, the vines winding through the white metal fencing that Hernán installed above the house's rampart-style front also give his family privacy from a block of taller apartments that overlooks their garden.

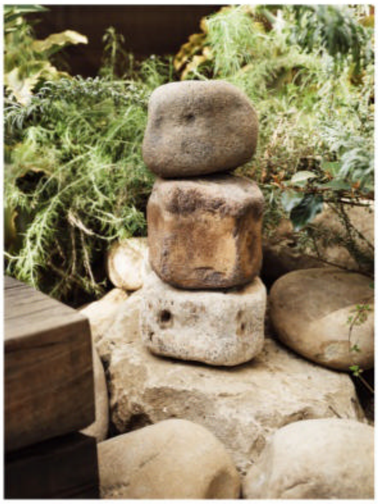
Not that it was meant as such, but Hernán's family home is something of a statement in an area under siege by developers. "It's a little nostalgic, to tell you the truth, because the city has to advance—you can't stop the city," he says. "Maybe it's the romanticism of the lost cause. But, well, this will stay here for a while." ■

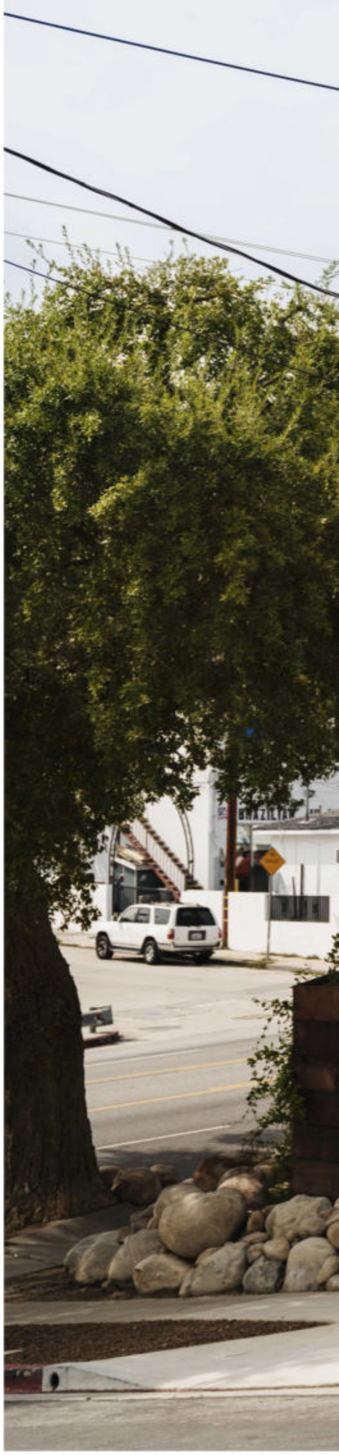
The rear terrace's flourishing garden includes butterfly-attracting *Asclepias* plants, an almond tree, and grasses and sages that bring bees. "In spring, the air is filled with their buzzing," says Hernán.



> "As I was making the house, I surrounded myself with images from books of beautiful gardens, and their influence poured through."
>
> **HERNÁN LANDOLFO, ARCHITECT AND RESIDENT**

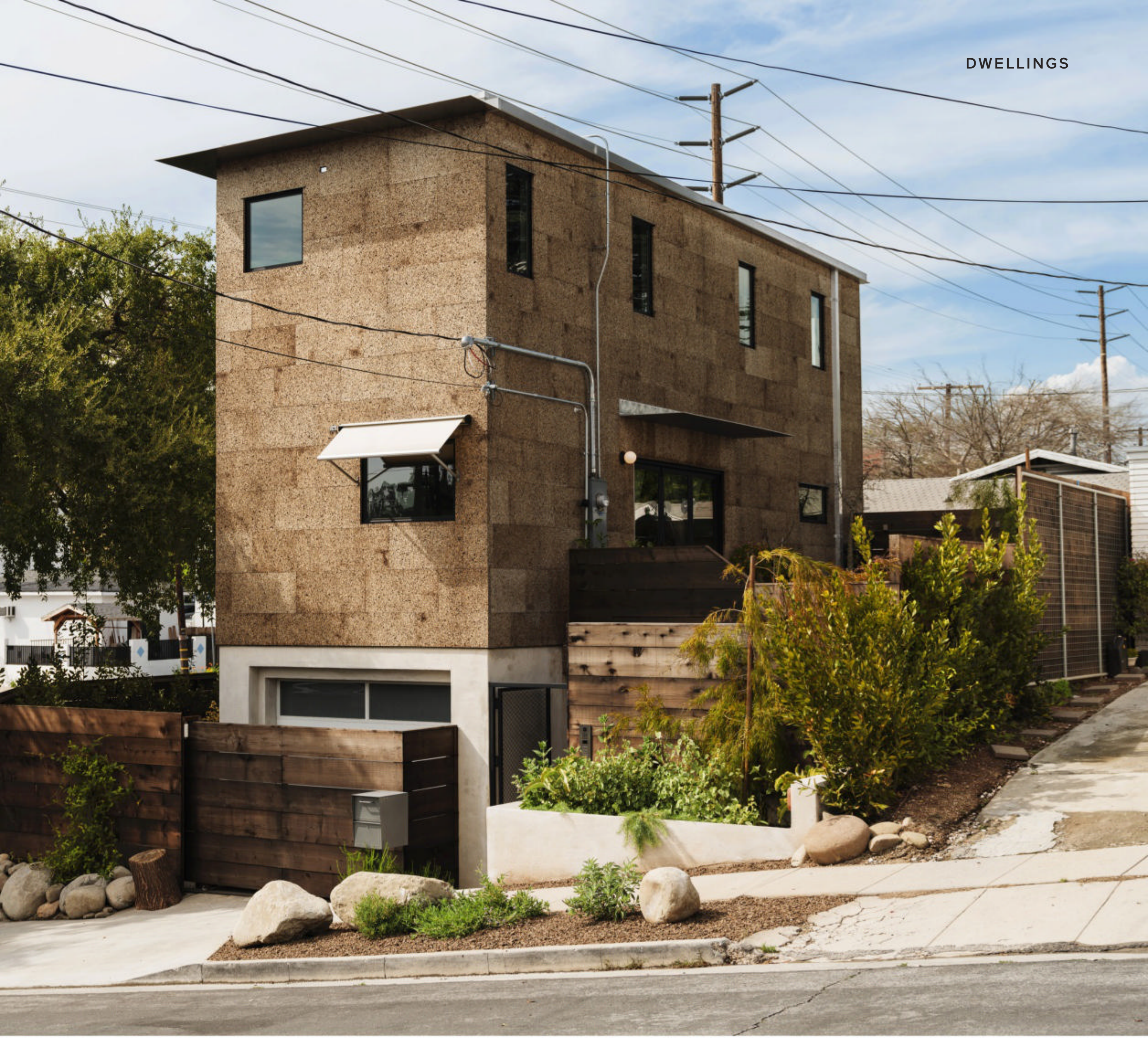
Landscape designer Molly Sedlacek's Los Angeles residence (far right) was built by Responsive Homes as a sustainable, experimental spec house, with a cork facade and shades to keep the interior cool. Molly often takes calls by the stairs between the entry and the patio (below), which she finished in brick by her company, OR.CA, and enclosed with redwood fencing. Cobblestones from her parents' property in Oregon form a sculpture in the front garden (right).





Familiar Footing

A Los Angeles developer's experiment in creating a sustainable home was the perfect starting point for a landscape designer.



TEXT BY
Duncan Nielsen

PHOTOS BY | @CHANTALAANDERSON
Chantal Anderson

Los Angeles has just seen more than a week of torrential weather, and Molly Sedlacek is explaining how the designer of her Highland Park home had been in touch to see how things were holding up. It's late February, and the mountains are capped with snow, but otherwise the city has returned to itself: bright and sunny. We're sitting around the kitchen island as Molly's two-year-old goldendoodle, Bear, bounces around our feet. The trifold door leading out to the patio is hung with sheers that float in the breeze. Smoke from an incense stick curls out a window that frames the branches of a cork tree.

"I was like, Yeah, everything's good," Molly says she told the designer. No leaks, no damage to report. But there were some updates. Walking around the house, she points out a patch of stucco on the garage turned work space, where water ran down the redwood fencing, leaving behind a streak of ruddy tannins. "Some people would totally freak out," says Molly. "But I like that sort of thing."

More than most, Molly, formerly a Bay Area–based landscape designer with her own company, OR.CA, is keenly interested >

Molly's dog, Bear, curls up on an Armadillo jute runner (left) next to vintage stools that came from a Japanese restaurant that was closing. The kitchen is open to the small living area with OR.CA outdoor sofas and another Armadillo rug (opposite). The pedestal coffee table is by Hawk and Stone. A cubby in the stairwell on the first level (below) provides storage space and houses pieces from Molly's ceramics collection.

in the mark of time. Her work, which includes several backyards in San Francisco's Outer Sunset neighborhood and, more recently, a ceramicist's home in Ojai (featured in Dwell's November/December 2022 issue), relies on aging processes for character: A steel fireplace becomes flecked with oranges and reds after exposure to moisture; plantings fill out corners between decking that silvers from sun. For Molly and her work, age is beauty and beauty is a process.

With jobs ramping up in Southern California, Molly was looking for a live/work situation in L.A., and her ability to envision things in the future came in handy when she found a residence for sale designed and built by Michael Tessler of Responsive Homes. With a flat roof and set atop a garage, the home has a narrow, two-level plan—just 860 square feet—that made it the odd one out in a neighborhood of low-slung gables. The facade was covered in brown cork panels. The front yard and rear patio, sparsely landscaped, didn't offer privacy from North Figueroa Street or the house to the rear. It was perfect.

"I almost felt like I was a part of the team that built it and was the last person to come in and occupy it and do the garden," Molly says. "It was like Michael had understood what I would have requested. It felt very built for my lifestyle."

Now known as Fig, Molly's home is the second experiment by Tessler (his home was the first) in creating a sustainable vernacular for Los Angeles. Terrazzo

>

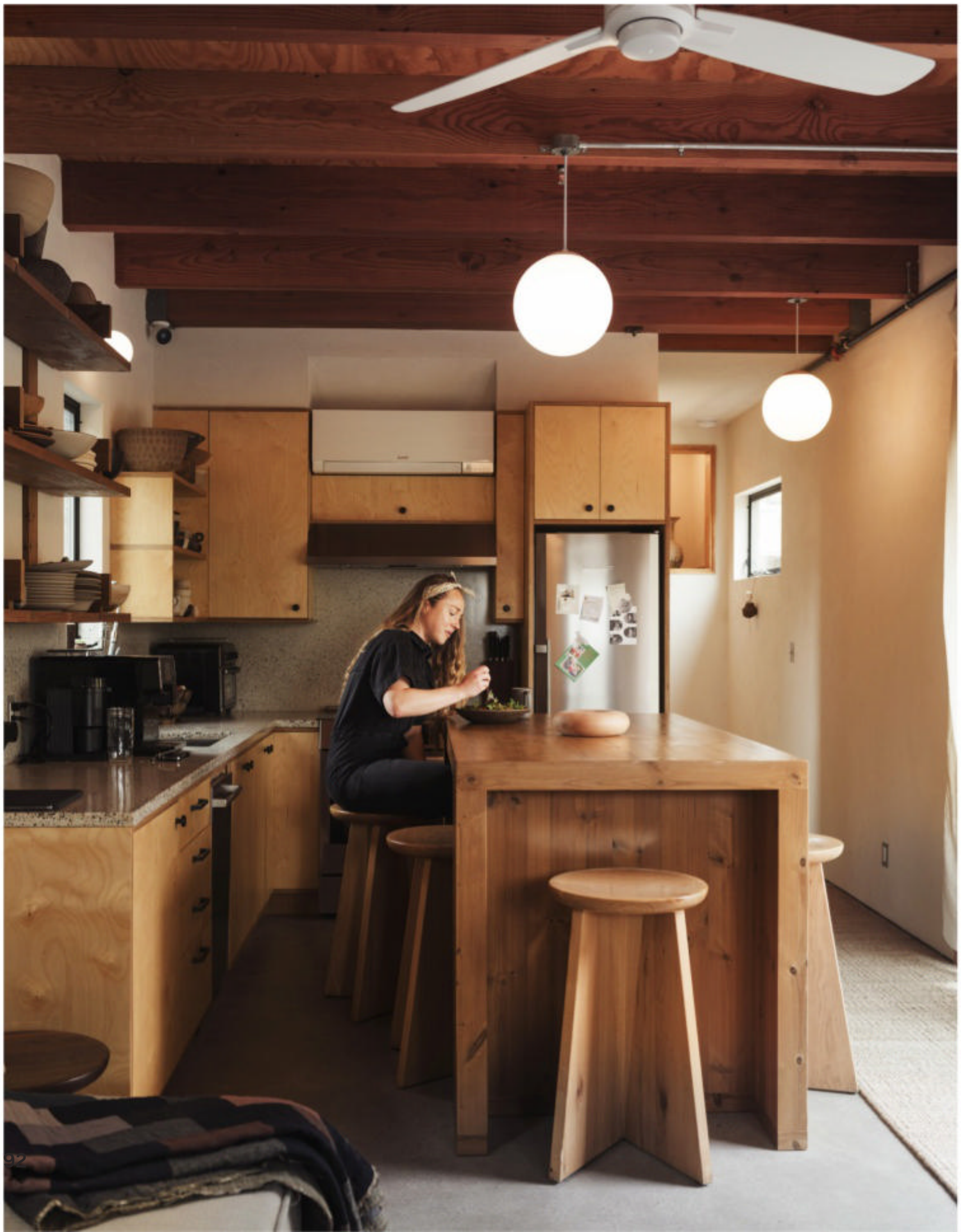
countertops in the kitchen, bathrooms, and garage are made with sediment from the Los Angeles River. The flooring, trim, and casework, all in local fast-growing shamel ash, are from Angel City Lumber. Tessler used clay plaster everywhere inside except for the wet areas, which received tadelakt plaster, and avoided paint. “That’s part of my obsessiveness over biodegradable materials,” he says.

The facade’s ThermaCork panels, made of renewable materials from Portugal’s cork oak forests in the Alentejo region, are the only element that traveled a distance. “It’s the only agroforestry product I know of that, just by the nature of someone buying it, involves the industry saving and stewarding these trees because only the oldest trees produce the best quality cork,” Tessler says, “and even though they’re shipped across the world, they’re still basically carbon neutral, because it’s the bark of the tree. It’s sequestered onto the house. And the cork regrows and induces the tree to sequester more carbon.”

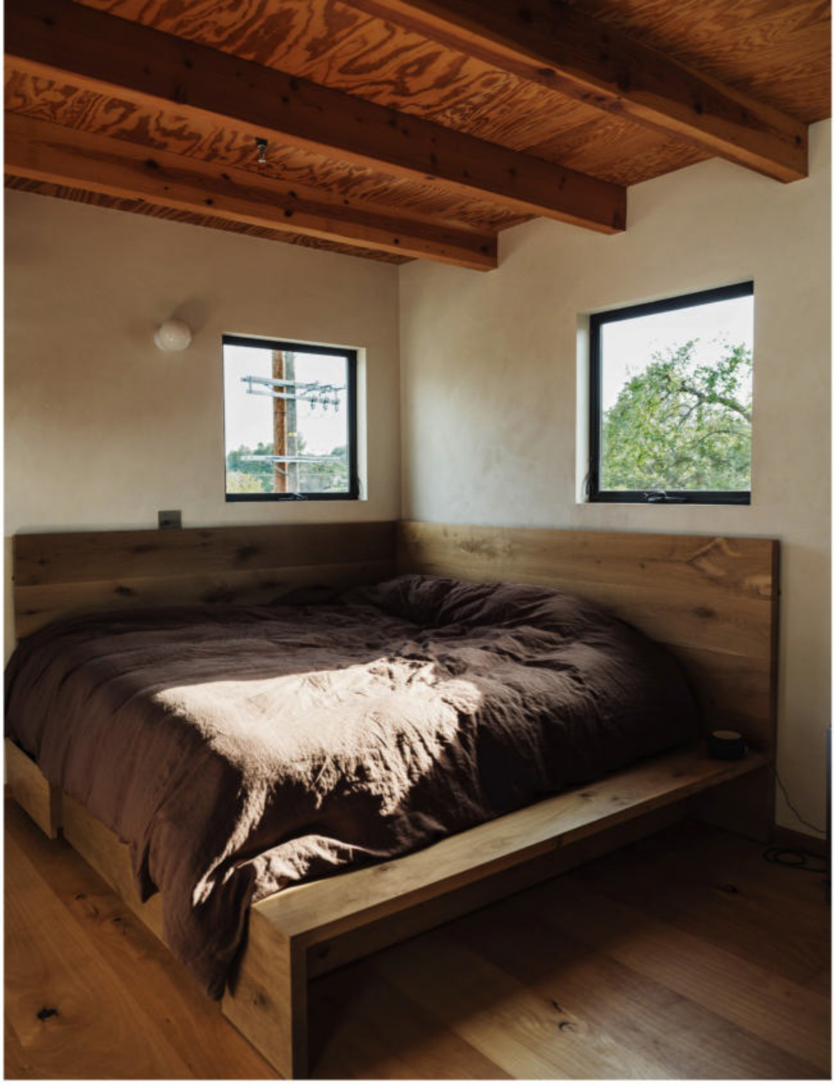
After Molly got the keys to the house in the spring of 2022, she and her partner, Ryan Scott, gave it their personal touch, adding shelving in the kitchen to display dishware and decor—“It made it feel more like a home,” says Molly—and, upstairs, a bed frame and an open bookcase that lend shape to what was an open room.

The most impressive changes, unsurprisingly, surround the home. “I think what it really needed was life around it. >

“I wanted the materials to drive the design. How do you simplify the building envelope and the palette in order to make the house local?” **MICHAEL TESSLER, DEVELOPER**



When Molly moved in, the kitchen already had cabinets, made of shamel ash from Angel City Lumber and topped with counters in terrazzo that Responsive Homes made using sediment from the Los Angeles River. She added an island to create “some separation of space,” she says, as well as open shelving.



To save space in the bedroom (above), Molly and her partner, Ryan Scott, designed a bed frame that nests into the corner. Drawers at the foot of the bed add storage, and a bench doubles as a side table.

Responsive Homes used the same terrazzo and timber in the powder room (left) as it did in the kitchen. Steps with drawers (right) lead to a small "quiet area" and additional storage at the top of the stairwell.

It felt like it kind of landed on a hillside, so my whole goal was to create a boundary and then layer in some softness," says Molly. Horizontal redwood fencing now encloses the yard along the street and the back patio off the kitchen. Molly filled the gap between the fence and the patio, which she refinished in rough-cut clay bricks by OR.CA, with moody plantings that include bay laurel, Ebbing's silverberry (a nod to Molly's home state of Oregon and her mom, also a landscape designer), willow wattle, and Japanese honeysuckle. A potted elephant tree that lived inside up north now sits outside, "living its best life," says Molly.

For seating, the couple brought back Angel City Lumber to carve fallen coast live oak trees into massive benches that are stacked in an L-shape flanking the entry stairs and facing back toward the kitchen. Those were designed by Ryan. "We specced these pieces with bark on," says Molly. "The wane on the wood makes changes more tangible. You get to watch it fall off and see how it weathers and celebrate that. That's really neat."

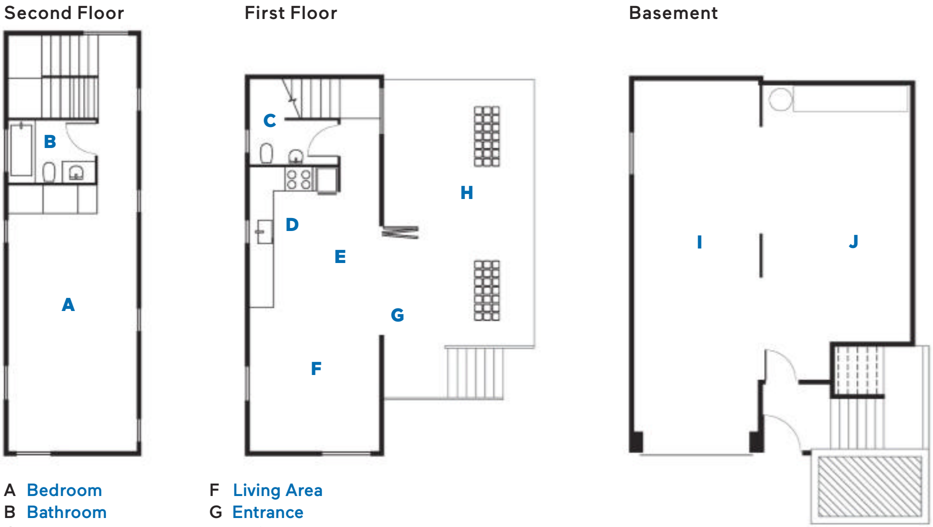
The blend of woods Molly chose for the yards is meant to mirror the home's cork finish, which will gain a similar patina. "It ages like wood, but it almost gets this extra level of character to it with the spottiness of the fleck," she says, holding up an extra panel she pulled out of her samples library in the downstairs studio space.

Around the corner from the studio, the cork oak that was visible from the small window in the kitchen reveals itself in full. (Molly guesses its age as 80, and

>

R1

ARCHITECT Utopiad
DESIGNER Responsive Homes
LOCATION Los Angeles, California

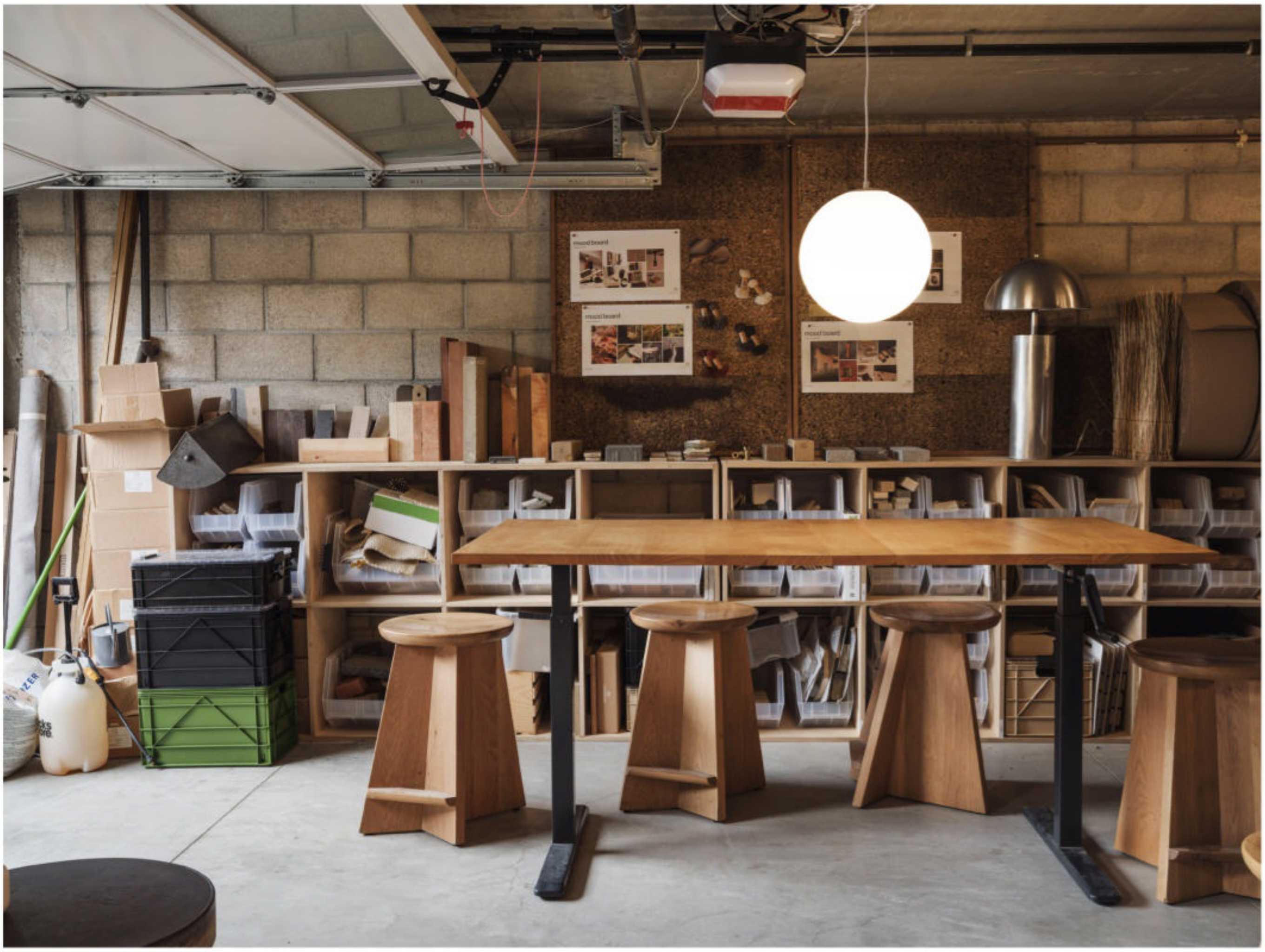


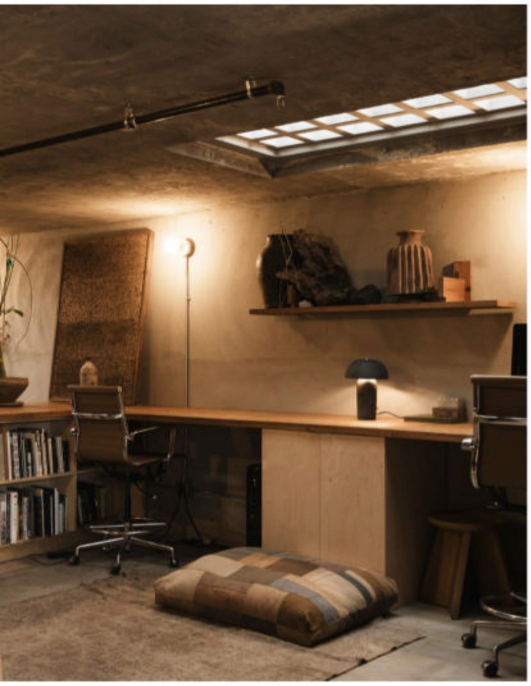
A Bedroom
B Bathroom
C Powder Room
D Kitchen
E Dining Area
F Living Area
G Entrance
H Patio
I Garage
J Utility Room

> "I always think gardens are never done."
>
> **MOLLY SEDLACEK, LANDSCAPE DESIGNER AND RESIDENT**

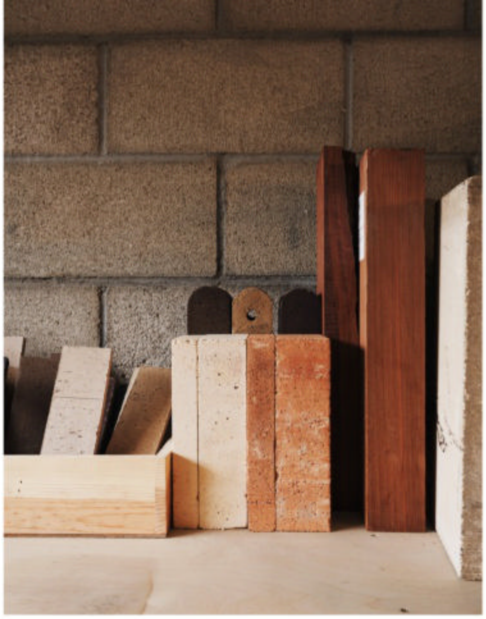
A chunk of Ubatuba granite (above left) was one of the first things Molly placed in the front garden (opposite), which runs along North Figueroa Street's four lanes of traffic. The yard feels secluded thanks to solid fencing and a buffer of dense greenery. Benches by Angel City Lumber, stacked on stones and all from Molly's home state of Oregon, create a seating moment to look back at a towering cork oak tree. The pavers and Adirondack chairs are all from OR.CA.

ILLUSTRATION: LOHNES+WRIGHT





Molly has her design studio in the garage (above), which is one use Responsive Homes founder Michael Tessler envisioned when he was forced by the city to include space for two cars in the home's plan. Skylights built into the patio provide natural light to the desk area (left). A strip of terrazzo along the trifold door off the kitchen (below) echoes the counters elsewhere.



Molly's samples library in her studio is chock-full of earthy texture and color (left). Bear is on his best behavior on the patio (below), where a mixture of rough-and-ready elements, like the oak logs, designed by Ryan, play off the fleck of the cork panels. "The whole point of the house is that you can see what it's built from," says Molly. "So I think it was about embracing that."

Tessler says it's the largest he's seen in the city.) It provides a foil from busy North Figueroa Street, as do the redwood fence, thriving plants like the bay laurel, which Molly says will grow to 18 feet, and beloved objects designed and found. The first thing she put here, even before the fence, was a block of Ubatuba granite with a raked texture. At one end of the yard are more benches by Angel City Lumber, again in an L shape, that give form to the space. There is also a stack of whale bones, given to Molly by a friend, which she likes to rearrange from time to time.

But one of Molly's favorite additions to the yard is a felt-leaf kalanchoe bush. "My hope is that it lives alongside the cork oak and they grow together," she says. "Putting it here feels symbolic of what was here and what is now for the land."

We head back to the patio, where Bear comes over to greet us. "Bear, are you made of wood?" asks Molly, scratching behind his ears as he chews on a toy. The dog walks alongside us, and we take a seat on the oak benches, which match his silvered-out black hair. "He started out more black," she says, adding that this made him less desirable than the rest of his litter. Who knows if Molly knew he'd take on a "patina." Even if she didn't, she sees something that others don't: the possibility of what something can become. ■

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The Poolside Life—on Loan

TEXT BY
Alana Hope Levinson

It's never been easier to borrow your neighbor's turquoise paradise—or lease out your extra liquid square feet.

It was September 2022 and Lexi Pandell, a 33-year-old East Bay native living in nearby Danville, California, was trying to figure out if she should have a bachelorette party. The state was experiencing a heat wave—"the hottest and longest on record" for the month of September, the governor noted. All across the West, more than a thousand heat records were broken. There was only one idea that made any kind of sense: a pool.

"I am in a part of town that's a lot of ranch-style homes and rentals," Pandell says. There is no pool at her place or at any of her friends'; none of them live on "the other side of town [where] it's these mega mansions with giant pools and giant backyards." As the world gets hotter, we are becoming a country increasingly obsessed with private pools—there are more than 10 million in the U.S.—but only 8 percent of American households have a residential pool, according to research by the Pool and Hot Tub Alliance.

Pandell wasn't concerned about having a bachelorette party at all, but her friends offered to plan it. She insisted on something low-key: a private, intimate setting where a group of millennial women could drink, get Mexican food delivered, and listen to Beyoncé in peace. Basically, she wanted to simulate the experience of owning a pool without actually owning a pool.

Thankfully, there's an app for that: Swimply, a marketplace that allows users to rent pools owned by their more fortunate neighbors. The service, which takes a 15 percent cut from hosts (who set their hourly rate) and 10 percent from guests, now lists about 25,000 pools in 125 markets in the U.S., Canada, and Australia.

Pandell's friends had heard good things about what's commonly referred to as the "Airbnb for pools." Given the small size of their town, when they opened the app they didn't have to search long. For just $80 an hour, they'd get to float in a saltwater oasis, plus so much more: There were >

During the golden age of Hollywood, stars were inspired by William Randolph Hearst's Neptune pool, which is lined with marble, was heated by an oil-burning system, and features sculptures of mermaids, Venus, and cherubs. By the middle of the 20th century, every aspirational backyard needed its own patch of aquatic indulgence. Here, composer, producer, and musician Giorgio Moroder is seen at his pool in 1979 with a group of backup singers.

PHOTO: MICHAEL MONTFORT/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY

rocks to jump off, plus a slide, a waterfall, a hot tub, and more lounge furniture than they could possibly use. The outdoor area also included a massive kitchen with a bar and a grill, speakers, and a TV, as well as private bath/shower access and free Wi-Fi. The reviews were all glowing.

"I am extremely jealous of all the people here who do have pools. So I was like, Well, I can kind of live the fantasy for a second," Pandell says. "There is something really intriguing about getting a dip into the other side and, on the other hand, kind of depressing too. I live only a few miles from you, but what a different existence I have."

—

In the West, we dream of water. California is home to some 1.3 million private pools. The indoor-outdoor lifestyle dream traces back a century, to when the rich and famous zeroed in on the pool as one of the most aspirational features of a California home.

Starting in the late 1920s, architects like Frank Lloyd Wright and Richard Neutra began designing homes for their Californian clients with pools as integral architectural features, not just rectangles out back filled with water. Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford were said to have built the first in-ground pool in the L.A. area at their Beverly Hills estate; the couple were famously photographed canoeing in the pool, which was 100 feet long. It wasn't until the middle of the century, when a California-based company refined gunite, essentially sprayable concrete, that private pools became much more affordable.

But long before the private pool became the object of lust of every upwardly mobile American household, public pools were symbols of our country's commitment to exclusion. In the early 1900s, pools were segregated by gender, but their eventual integration meant the intimate public spaces became hotbeds of fear over miscegenation. In the 1920s and '30s, though thousands of public swimming pools were opened across the country—what is known as the "swimming pool age"—virtually all were segregated racially, either by law or by acts of violence.

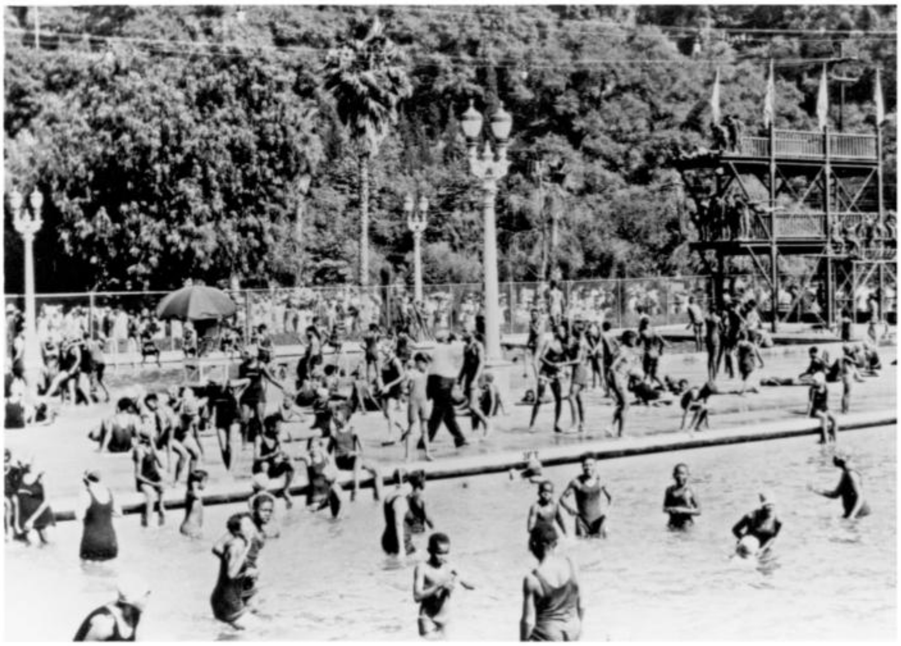
According to Jeff Wiltse, author of *Contested Waters: A Social History of Swimming Pools in America,* some historians say the modern civil rights movement kicked off in Southern California over the right to swim at public pools. In 1914, Pasadena opened the Brookside Plunge for whites only. Protests from Black citizens brought a concession: People of color could come one day a week, right before the pool was cleaned. Further protests led to a complete ban until 1929, when the once-weekly day—dubbed "International Day"—was reinstated. The pool wouldn't desegregate until 1947—only to shut down a year later. It was the racial integration of pools across the country that led to mass shutdowns, and the wealthy flocked to new private (and segregated) swim clubs or took aim at getting ones of their own.

The desire for a pool of one's own would be emphasized for Californians, who, even before we recognized that the effects of climate change exacerbated matters, were plagued by drought and punishing heat waves. To us, the pool is a kind of oasis, our collective thirst intensified by a cultural obsession with glamour and leisure. "A pool is misapprehended as a trapping of affluence, real or pretended, and of a kind of hedonistic attention to the body. Actually a pool is, for many of us in the West, a symbol not of affluence but of order, of control over the uncontrollable," wrote Joan Didion in 1979, two years after the state experienced its driest year in history up to that point. "Water is important to people who do not have it, and the same is true of control."

The punishing drought of the mid-1970s was one of many times that nature has intervened to pull back the veneer of the Californian dream. We owe the popularity of the phrase "If it's yellow, let it mellow; if it's brown, flush it down" to this period. Exuberant green lawns across the state were drained of all life (and color) as families were instructed to turn off their sprinklers. In some places, couples would shower in pairs and collect water in a bucket to use later for flushing toilets or laundry. And, of course, people drained their pools. Environmentalism, coupled with a wave of foreclosures, meant pool draining hit hard in Southern California, where the majority of the state's gorgeous money pits are located. Perfectly paved kidney beans filled with aquamarine H_2O became unattended wastelands that (to some) were ripe with opportunity.

The western impulse is to create something out of nothing, and it can't be dissuaded by concepts like private property. Pioneering skateboarders like Tony Alva, Steve Olson, and Stacy Peralta realized that these empty pools would be perfect for their burgeoning sport. They'd search fancy neighborhoods for the nicest ones and then, when people were at work, hop their fences and do half pipes all day.

"L.A. was the backyard pool mecca. >



In the early 1900s, Pasadena mostly prohibited people of color from swimming in the Brookside Plunge. Sammy Lee, the first Asian American to win an Olympic medal for the U.S., would learn to dive there. Because of limited access, he had to train with a fake diving board and a sandpit pool in a coach's backyard.

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But not just the backyard pool mecca, the properly, beautifully designed backyard pool. I don't know of any place in the world that has that proliferation of that kind of voluptuous, sensuous design," Peralta said on the podcast *99 Percent Invisible* in 2017. "We fell in love with the shapes."

Though many days would end with angry homeowners chasing the boys off, for those brief moments the skaters got access to a world previously off-limits. The lack of water was essential, and when the skaters encountered pools that were still wet, they drained them. "We were a bunch of scruffy kids and here we are riding in backyard pools and we know what we're doing is beautiful," Peralta said. "And we get to feel beautiful."

—

It was 2016, and Bunim Laskin was stuck inside his family home in Lakewood, New Jersey, recovering from surgery, when it came to him. Through one of the windows, he noticed his neighbor's pool was sitting unused; she had built it for her grandchildren, but they rarely visited. As the eldest of 12 children, Laskin was always on the lookout for ways to entertain his siblings, and traveling anywhere was a logistical nightmare. He wondered if his neighbor would let them swim in exchange for a fee.

It wasn't long until Laskin recruited five other families in the neighborhood, and the payments started covering 25 percent of his neighbor's maintenance costs. Two years later, Laskin—along with cofounder Asher Weinberger—launched Swimply with four pools. They started using Google Earth to find more, and a combination of knocking on doors and word of mouth helped them acquire 100 pools and 400 reservations; in 2019, they were able to raise about $1 million from family and friends. The coronavirus ended up being a gift for the platform, as people were desperate for safe outdoor spaces where they could hang with friends. In the first year of the pandemic, the two partners say, they saw a 4,000 percent increase in revenue, which allowed them to raise $50 million from venture capitalists, including Airbnb and Lime cofounders, the following year. Restricted travel and quarantine requirements added appeal to the Swimply tagline "Escape locally."

The "escape" isn't solely about the pool itself. Laskin claims a "whole bunch of users" don't even get in the water—they just enjoy the freedom and relaxation of hanging out by it. Laskin thinks this is because pools are "places where [you] can be alive and not just exist." The calming effects of the pool work whether you get in or not—as a kind of peace by proxy. (It's possible that Instagramming from a fancy location helps too.)

According to Laskin, one of the main appeals to users and hosts is connection. Harking back to the early days of Uber, Lyft, and Airbnb, Swimply is marketed as a pathway to human connection. It's not just for renting a pool; it's for becoming friends with neighbors. "It doesn't even feel transactional; it feels neighborly," Laskin tells me on Zoom, from Swimply's Los Angeles office, admitting that "at first glance, the idea of privacy sounds almost like segmenting." (Of course, that hosts can discriminate however they want when approving neighbor guests is a much discussed issue across every platform in the sharing economy space.)

Laskin describes Swimply as a creator of community, which is, ironically, a main argument for why public pools should exist. But he says there's safety in privacy: You don't have to be in a bathing suit around strangers, you can more carefully supervise a group, and the water quality is superior. Admittedly, there's a limit to "safety" when you consider that Swimply pools, being private, aren't required to have lifeguards. In June 2022, a seven-year-old girl drowned at a Swimply "superhost" rental, which, Laskin told CNN, was a "pool incident" rather than a Swimply incident. The company offers up to $1 million in insurance coverage to its hosts, and water safety guidelines for users offer suggestions to help ensure the safety of all the guests. When fighting back against health officials in Minnesota who demanded that Swimply hosts meet a variety of public pool codes, cofounder Weinberger told the *Star Tribune* he "doesn't consider backyard pools rented through his app public, 'no more than Airbnb homes are hotels or Airbnb pools are public pools.'"

Outside of practical reasoning, people have a contemporary desire to experience spontaneous human connection but only in highly controlled environments. They want connection, but it needs to be curated and intimate—and it needs to be aspirational. They want to feel rich, and that's something a public space will never get you.

For her bachelorette party, Lexi Pandell was hosted by a 40-ish couple with a >

Swimply, which was conceived in 2016, allows owners to rent their private pools and is currently rolling out other outdoor spaces like tennis courts, large backyards, and even home gyms. In 2020, founder Bunim Laskin went on Shark Tank but failed to convince the Sharks to invest; they all worried the company was wildly overvalued at $6 million.

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young daughter. Her friends arrived at the picture-perfect suburban home early to set up and were greeted by the nice and normal husband. Before venturing back into the house, he asked the women if there was anything else they needed. One responded with a joke: “Not unless you have a sexy cop outfit,” a cheeky nod to traditional bachelorette parties. Everyone laughed and got back to setting up, and the host disappeared inside.

Pandell arrived soon after through a side gate. “We all were kind of commenting, like, *I can’t believe that this is real. It seems so impossible that this website exists—you can rent somebody’s pool and be in their backyard*.” Three hours passed as the friends lived out the dream of listening to *Renaissance* while enjoying Aperol spritzes. Pandell was the first one to try the water slide, and she was in heaven, posting snapshots from the party on her Instagram stories.

I’m a woman who can casually jump into the spa after a half-hearted attempt at bathing suit Pilates.

As they were enjoying slices of princess cake, Pandell noticed a man in a cop outfit approaching the pool. She assumed he was a real officer there to get them in trouble because of the noise, but his short-shorts were odd. It took the group a second to realize it was their Swimply host in a *Reno 911!* Lieutenant Dangle costume. They broke out in laughter and noticed that, inside, his small child was looking on, clad in her swimsuit and a towel, waiting for them to leave so she could use the pool.

Pandell’s party was a success. Even better, it gave her a funny story for life. Hosts all take their own approach to interacting with their guests, and some are more hands-on than others.

Jim Battan is a 58-year-old IT consultant who has been “trying to get retired” for some time now, and the side hustle that’s made him $200,000 in two and a half years isn’t helping. Battan, who lives just outside West Linn, Oregon, started hosting on Swimply in September 2020 to offset the $100,000 cost of installing his immaculate luxury pool. His daughters had gone off to college, and it bothered him that his creation often sat empty.

The gig quickly transformed into a full-time job. Far from the static symbol of accumulated wealth it was in the 20th century, the modern pool, thanks to apps like Swimply, is an asset to be monetized, a way of optimizing every square inch of your home. That requires investment, and Battan is passionate about it: He checks the pool’s chemistry every three to four hours and insists on an elite user experience—complete with free sunscreen, barn animal tours, and a trampoline. Because of this—and the lack of pools in his area, private or public—during peak periods, his pool has racked up as many as 130 bookings a month. He has had visitors who have come over 50 times, and he’s there to greet every one and make sure things go smoothly.

“During the pandemic, it was the only way for the kids to get out of the house. The community center pools were closed, and there was no gymnasium and all that kind of stuff,” says Battan, who has had the number one Swimply pool in the country. “One mom would come and experience and then go to tell the whole PTA about it. Now, pretty much the whole of one elementary school has been here.”

It isn’t always easy being a normal guy who suddenly has a high-traffic pool full of strangers in his backyard. But the worst “accident” that’s ever happened to him has been a guest running over some plants. “It’s always advertised as, *Oh, you don’t even have to be there. All this passive income with virtually no effort*. And I always laugh at them and say, ‘That’s ridiculous,’ ” says Battan. Since he plans to actually retire soon, he and his wife are considering moving, and as such, they are trying to wind down their Swimply business and focus on packing up the house. But he’s hoping his decision won’t mean his area is going to lose its favorite pool.

“That’s gonna be one of the big, key selling points of the house,” Battan says. “You now have the top Swimply pool in the country, if you wanna keep it up.”

—

The day I’m set to try Swimply for myself, nature has other plans: rain. California has always had variable weather, but climate change has made the extremes increasingly dangerous and intolerable. Multiple Swimply hosts in my neighborhood of Los Feliz cancel on me, as Angelenos often take the day off when it drizzles. A couple days later, Swimply arranges for me to visit a pool that’s been featured in one of the company’s ads for $72 an hour in Tarzana. It looks like the platonic ideal of a new-construction, suburban pool, encircled by shrubbery, gray lounge chairs, and a white pool house. I drive one hour (with traffic, naturally) to the Valley, where private pools are abundant and the weather is slightly warmer.

Before I arrive, the host sends me a message with instructions. The gate is open, and I can park in the driveway if I want. When I pull in to park next to a Porsche and a Mercedes, the host comes out to say hi and shows me around back to the massive pool and hot tub, which is already bubbling. The bathroom is around the side of the guesthouse; floaties are on the lawn; and if I hear chickens, don’t be alarmed—there’s a coop tucked away somewhere. The interaction lasts a total of one minute before the host disappears inside, giving me the run of the place.

Her minimal contact with me is ideal; it makes it easy to forget I don’t own the pool. I proceed to do what I imagine I’d do all the time if this life were mine: grab the yoga mat and light weights I brought and start working out in the sun. Occasionally, I feel self-conscious, but by the time I head over to the hot tub for a soak-and-attempt-to-meditate, I’ve completely forgotten that someone could be in the house, watching me. This is my life now; I’m a woman who can casually jump into the spa after a half-hearted attempt at bathing suit Pilates.

But it’s not long until the reverie is broken. Fifteen minutes before my reservation is up, I’m cordially alerted that it’s time to collect my things and get out. I am reminded of something Pandell told me of her experience. “As a kid, I really idolized these people. I would go to their houses and it was a completely different world, and I really wanted it for myself,” Pandell said. “Now I’m an adult, and I still don’t have it, and sixteen-year-old me would be very disappointed about that. I can rent it, but there will always be someone there to remind me that it is still not mine.” ■

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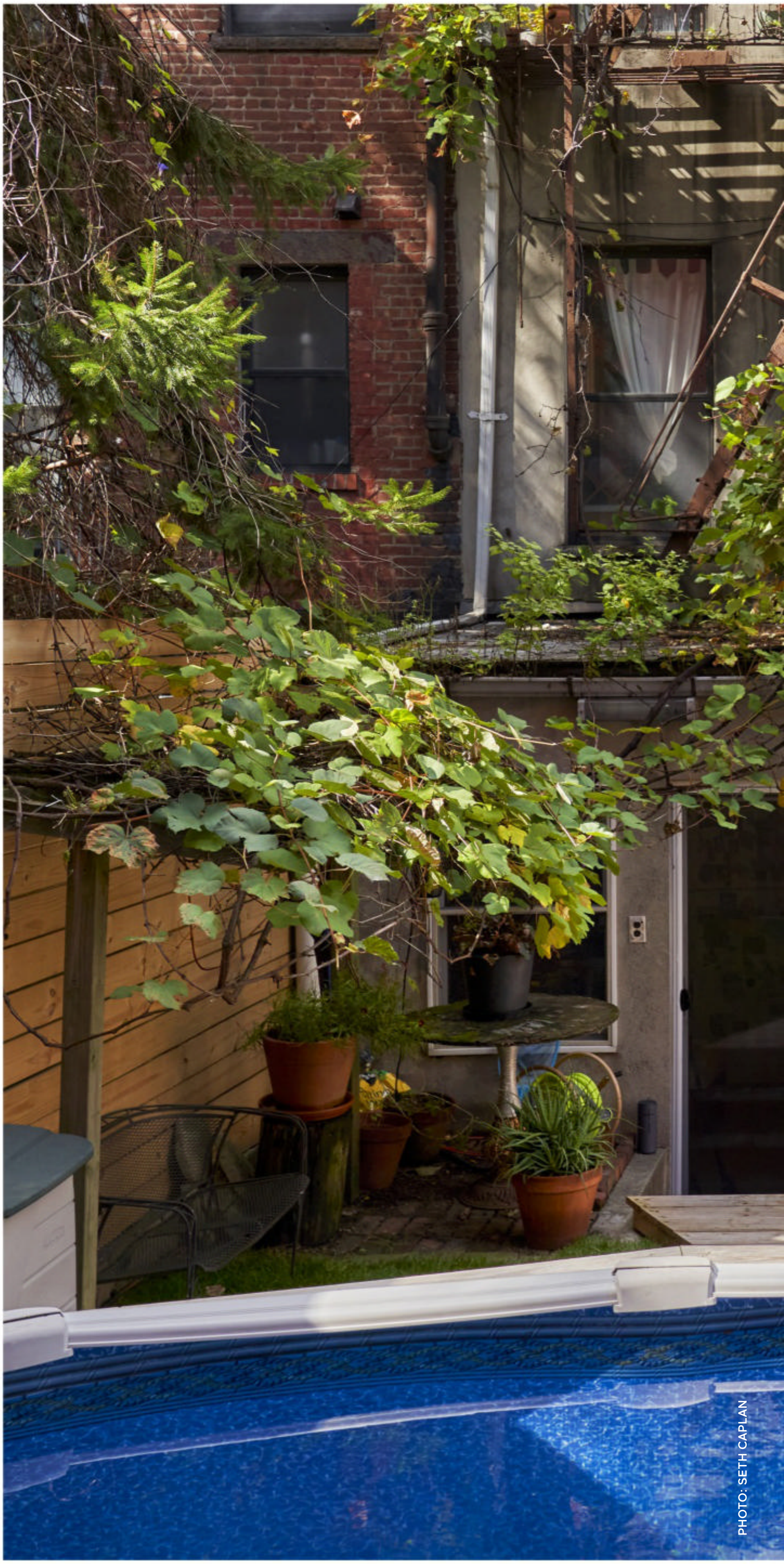


Though he rents his Williamsburg, Brooklyn, apartment, Taylor Dow had enough room to install an aboveground pool. His advice for would-be bathers: Work with the space you have. For example, consider whether your outdoor oasis is better suited to an aboveground pool or a bathtub-like stock tank.

PHOTO: SETH CAPLAN

Pool Pioneers

TEXT BY
Molly Osberg

Meet four pool owners with a dedication to the aquatic lifestyle despite circumstances that might have frustrated the meek.

Taylor Dow, Brooklyn

For Taylor Dow, getting a pool was a gradual process that also happened to be the realization of a long-term dream. When he lived on the top floor of his building in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, in the early 2000s, he'd look down at a neighbor's aboveground situation and vow to have something similar of his own one day. (To add insult to injury, the neighbor appeared to take a dip only once or twice a year.) In 2012, Taylor got the chance to move to the garden level of the same building and take over the yard. At that time, he says, it was just a patch of dirt. Over the next decade, that would change.

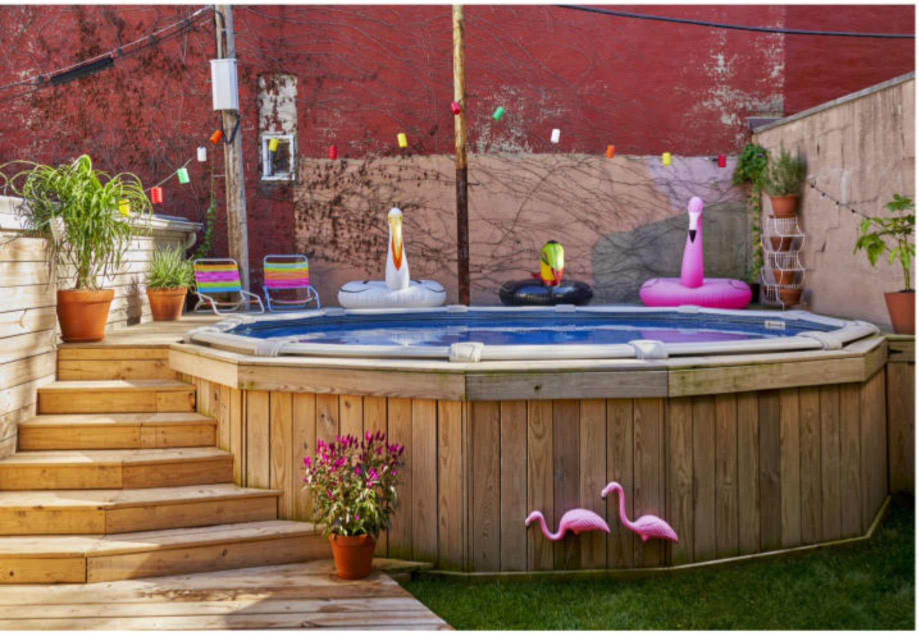
First, as a joke, a friend brought an adult-size inflatable pool to Taylor's birthday party one year: "It lasted about six hours before we realized it wasn't a real thing," he says. He endeavored to find himself something that would last a bit longer, which is how he found a nearby company specializing in aboveground pools; his main request was that it use saltwater to reduce the number of chemicals he and his friends would have to endure.

Taylor is a co-owner of the campy Brooklyn dives The Commodore and The Drift. He says he likes to "embrace the idea of taking you somewhere else" with his businesses; that attitude extends to his rental, which he considers a safe haven in a corner of the city that's been constantly under construction for at least the last 20 years. His place, by design, doesn't really feel like New York. And he's lucky: His landlord, so far, allows it.

The pool has inspired a few adjacent projects. First there was the structure itself, then the decking and landscaping to complement it. Last summer, Taylor added more decking still to create a clean path straight from the kitchen to the water. Naturally there's also a billiards table downstairs.

A growing number of small pool owners have, like Taylor, chosen saline over chlorine. The upkeep for a saltwater pool, he says, is minimal, and he'd recommend it unequivocally. He has a pool guy who specializes in aboveground setups like these and travels from the Midwest to Brooklyn every summer, installing and maintaining city dwellers' oases before going back home to "chill," Taylor says, for the rest of the year. Taylor says he's often one of the first and last stops for this particular pool guy, who will open this Williamsburg haven in the middle of May and keep it functional as late as November. Even if it's too cold to go for a swim, Taylor enjoys being able to gaze out at the water.

"It's my little escape," he says. "I don't have to go anywhere during the summer." But if you find yourself in possession of a pool, he notes, you should definitely expect to have friends of friends suddenly reaching out: "People have certainly, like, caught on through the years." Taylor is canny about how he maintains a healthy boundary around his pool without being rude. "I'm not mad," he says of all his new summertime acquaintances. "I'd be doing the same thing."



Taylor recommends considering a saline pool: Saltwater pools generally need less maintenance and don't require you to test chlorine levels regularly.

Abigail Lloyd & Bell Kauffman, Hudson, New York

When Abigail Lloyd and Bell Kauffman purchased their definitive fixer-upper of a home in January 2020, they planned to renovate it slowly, traveling from Brooklyn when time allowed. But by the middle of March they were living in the house while they worked on it, and it was time to deal with the cement-lined pit in the backyard, which was filled with more than a foot of water and debris. Also, there was a dead possum inside.

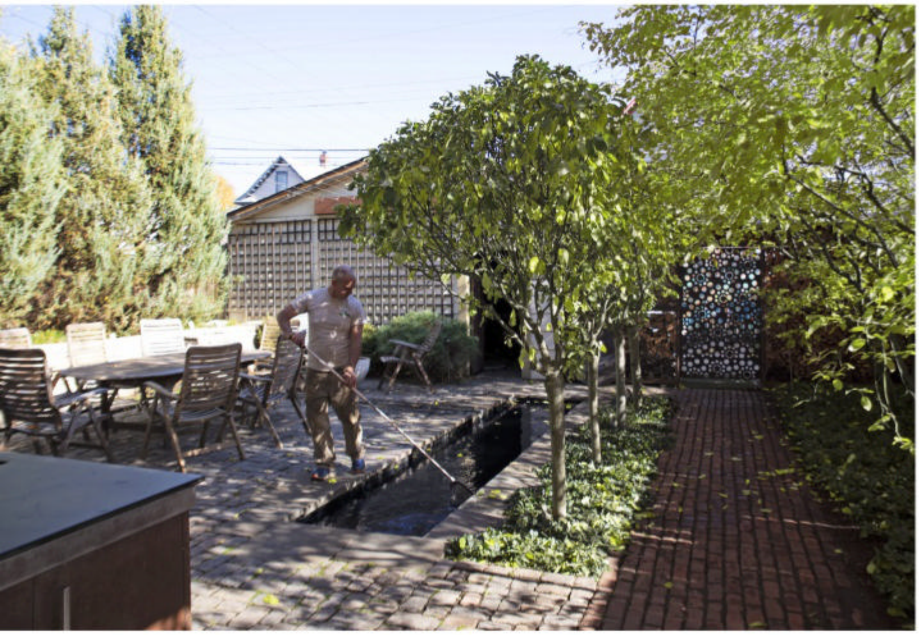
The couple, who jointly run the metalworking firm Hedron Studio out of their converted garage in upstate New York, say their business is based on manipulating available materials to fit their needs. So the pit, disgusting as it was, offered an opportunity. They considered turning it into a sandbox or a flower bed, but Bell convinced Abigail a pool was a worthwhile project—Bell had a theory it might have been a koi pond or a splash pool for the kids who'd lived in the house a generation before. Plus, it was nearly impossible to find a stock tank during the pool boom of that prevaccine summer, and a water feature was starting to seem like a very good idea.

The pair fished out the possum (it was "still bleeding," according to Bell), sanded down the cement, resealed the pit with pool paint, and purchased online an Intex filter commonly used in stock tanks. >

PHOTOS: SETH CAPLAN

Bell Kauffman (left) and Abigail Lloyd turned to the internet for tips on how to transform the pit in their backyard into a water feature. If you use a filter like they did—Intex is a popular brand—make sure you site your pool near a reliable power source.

> “Some decisions aren’t yours. But they end up being awesome.”
> **ABIGAIL LLOYD, RESIDENT**



Eric Baldus's pond-pool has a particularly short season of use because of Minnesota's cold climate. If you're similarly confined by the weather, plan for a drainage route ahead of time: No one wants to get stuck with water they can't move when it's time to empty the pool.

When you work with existing structures, says Abigail, "some decisions aren't yours. But they end up being awesome." The saltwater splash pool overlooking a pond has become one of the best decisions they've made, even if it was mostly inadvertent. It certainly helps when they need to escape the sweltering heat after a day spent welding or hauling miscellaneous debris out of the house.

During the summer of 2020, Abigail and Bell estimate, they had 30-odd guests come to their new, ramshackle home, most up from New York City. The pool was an invaluable resource and a way to see friends in a terrifying time. "You sit with a drink. You chat. It's not swimming, you know? It's social," Abigail says. One experience they'll never try again, though: putting their partially paralyzed dog, Cedar, in there for her physical therapy.

"It's the quintessential DIY project," says Bell, who spent an inordinate amount of time researching the sorts of filtration systems that might be appropriate for their small, accidental pool. "It involves a good amount of YouTube research, but the materials are very widely available." And, Bell adds, pretty cheap.

But it's not as if the derelict pit was the only reason the pair decided to rebuild a backyard pool: There's just something so opulent about sliding into water on a hot day. Before the couple moved into their ongoing project of a home, Abigail would put a tarp in the bed of her truck and fill it with a hose to escape the hot New York City summers. "That's how committed to the pool life we are," she says.

Eric Baldus, Minneapolis

Minneapolis, a city with temperatures that regularly dip below zero, may not be the most obvious location for a plunge pool in a backyard. But contractors tend to have a vision of their ideal house, and Eric Baldus's had always included a pool. Frequently coming home exhausted and sweaty after working all day on someone else's vanity project, he wanted somewhere of his own to cool off.

So when the landscape designer bought a 126-year-old Victorian in the northeast part of the city around 2004, the backyard was the thing he started work on right away. "And of course, 19 years later, I'm still working on it," he says. "I'm an indentured servant to my own home."

Eric's 16-foot-long freshwater pool, the centerpiece of an expansive patio with an outdoor kitchen and a pizza oven, is for dunking. And it's "technically a pond." Pools are regulated differently by the city, and for a while, visitors to the house would share the recreational water feature with various species of fish. "Traditional pools dominate yards," Eric says. "It's just not great to look at." He wanted to design something that his two daughters could splash around in but that wouldn't overpower the landscape with that particular teal chlorinated water tends to have. What he ended up with was something between a reflecting pool and what was likely the smallest fish-stocked pond in the history of the state.

Eric was on a pretty tight budget for someone looking to break ground. He borrowed a mini-excavator from another job to dig a hole in his backyard, then built a wooden foundation much like one you'd see underneath a house. The wood is kept separate from the water by layers of crushed clear rock and synthetic rubber roofing membrane, a material Eric often uses on the job; a UV filter and a sediment filter keep the water clean.

If there is one piece of advice he would give to prospective freshwater pool owners, it's to "skip the fish, enjoy the life." For the first few years of the pool's operation, Eric stocked it with koi (and, once, trout). It seemed like a good idea at the time. But keeping fish alive through the Minnesota winter is hard work: "I'm a terrible koi owner," he says.

A few years back, having given up on the dream of a combination fishery and recreational pool, he decided to end the experiment: He stripped down, hopped in the pool with a net, and enjoyed several fish dinners in a row. (Originally, he'd attempted to catch the fish with just a line, but they "caught on to me," he says. In a small space, trout can be pretty smart.)

The upkeep is easier now. Plus, it's kinder to visitors looking to cool off during the pool season, which in Minneapolis lasts only about three months: "People got a little freaked out by fish in there," Eric says. The current iteration of the pool is much easier to explain on Airbnb. ■

PHOTO: MARK KHAN

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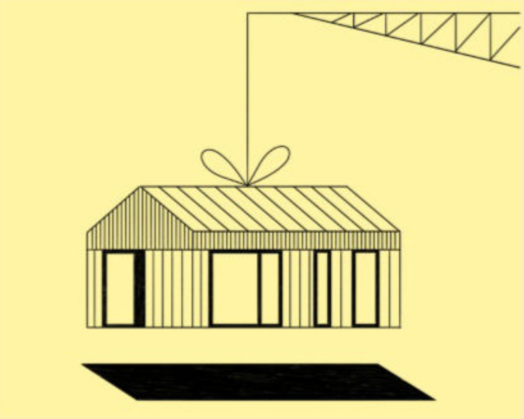

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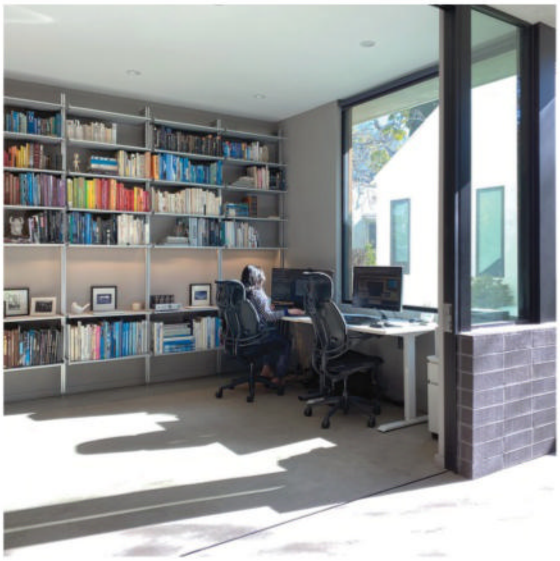

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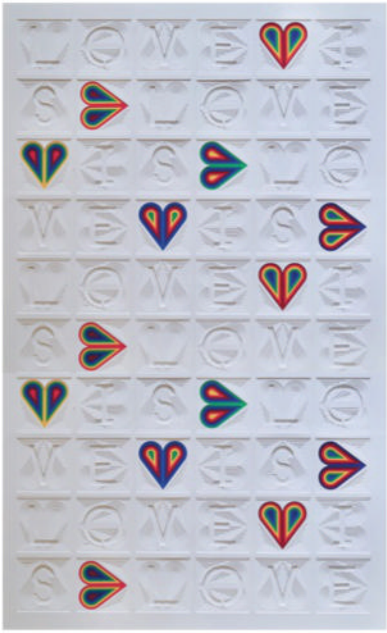

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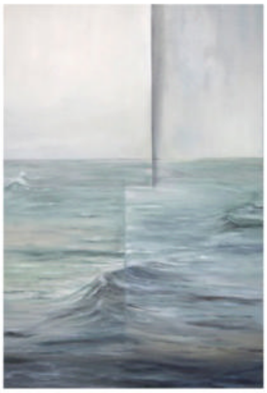

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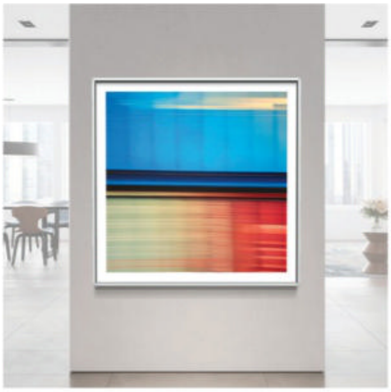

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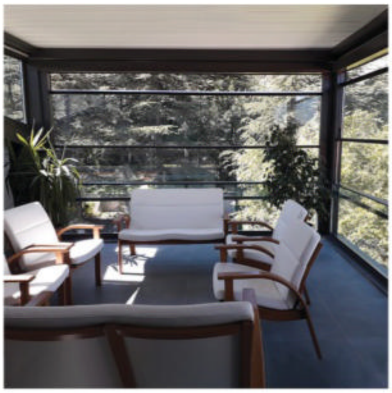

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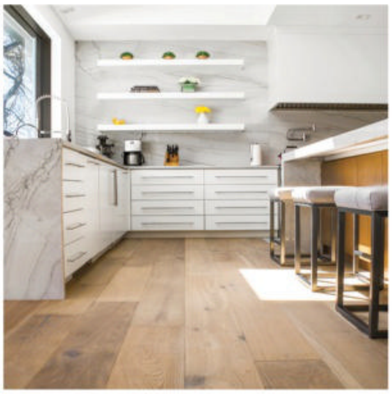

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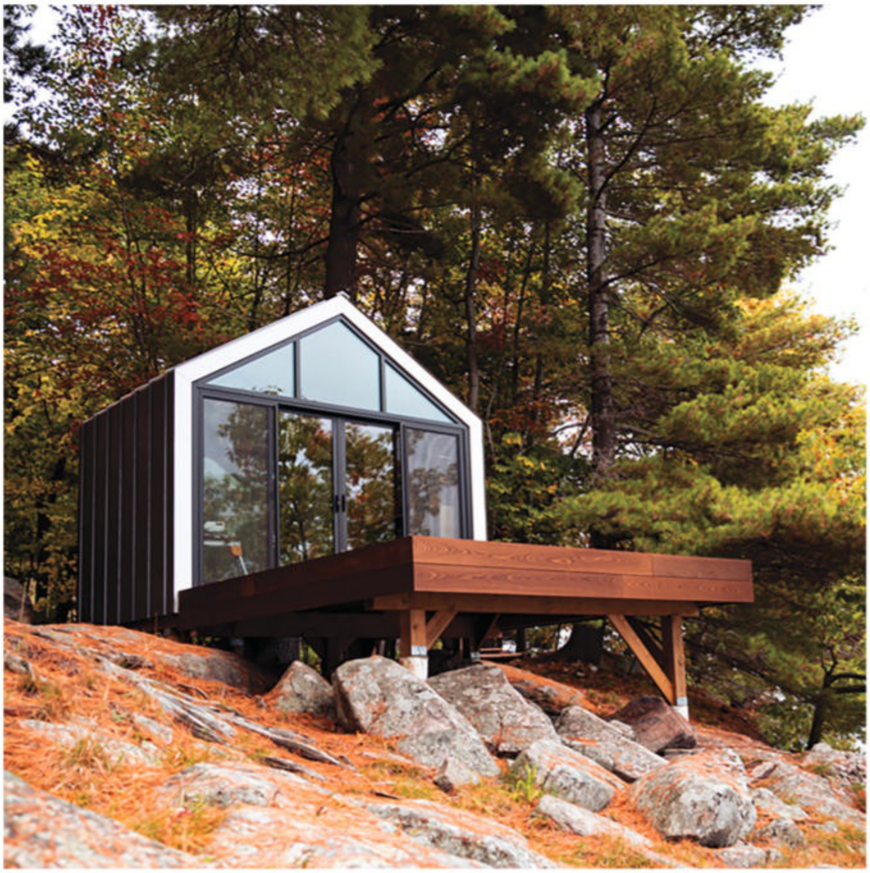

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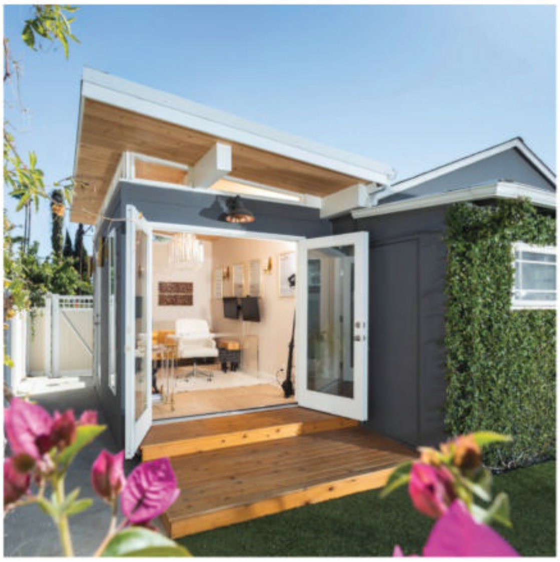

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Set dressing by Jared Piller
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Desar Construction Studio desar.ca
Structural engineering by Honeycomb Group honeycombgroup.ca
Cabinetry design and installation by BL Woodworking blwoodworking.ca
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60 Creative Block

Lia Maston, Firma Architecture firmaarchitecture.com
Kyle Cloutier, True Living Concepts @true_living_concepts
Structural engineering by Marek Gabris, Gabris Associates
Mechanical engineering by Adrian Kasjak
Mechanical services by Jack Chiu
Sheet metal from Myron Corporation
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Drywall and venetian plaster by Murillo Silva and Domenico Marchesini
Interior design by Karissa Carcano
Millwork by Mikal Maston
Landscape design by Cardy Lai
61 **Glass block in Wave 1919/8 2S Pink from Seves** sevesglassblockinc.com; **polished concrete block from Day & Campbell** daycampbell.com

62 Connect the Dots

La Shed Architecture lashedarchitecture.com
CBT cbt-inc.ca
Structural engineering by Geniex geniex.ca
Landscape design by Friche Atelier fricheatelier.com
63 **Sofa by Interversion** interversion.com; **lamps from Jacques & Anna; outdoor table by Établi** etabli.ca; **outdoor chairs from Le Balconier** lebalconier.com; **round table and wall storage by Ariane Martel-Labrecque and Ariane Ouellet-Pelletier**
Dishwasher from Gaggenau gaggenau.com; **Radius 10 U Super Single sink, Posh faucet, and Solon-If integrated organic waste bin from Blanco** blanco.com; **pendant by Jacques & Anna**

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Nathan Fell Architecture nathanfellarchitecture.com
Structural engineering by Howard Engineering howard-eng.com
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Finding the Center

80 Finding the Center

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80 **Pink and blue terrazzo from Monolithic** monolithic.com.ar
81 **Square steel window by Oficios Asociados** oficiosasociados.com.ar; **glass brick from Vitroblock** vitroblock.com.ar
82 **Beige terrazzo countertop from Pimux** pimux.com; **circular steel window by Oficios Asociados**
83 **Tall window by Oficios Asociados; Moon armchair by Un Lugar Así** @unlugarasi; **table chairs and bench by La Base** labasestudio.com; **Scottish green curtains from Gunter Dillenberger & Hijos** dillenberger.com
84 **White outdoor table by Oficios Asociados**

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Molly Sedlacek, OR.CA Living orcaliving.com
Responsive Homes responsivehomes.com
Utopiad utopiad.org
Corey Ruppert, Salt Mine
Cabinetry design and installation by Angel City Lumber and Murray's Woodworks
Plaster walls by Scott Nelson, Naturalwalls
90 **Rug from Armadillo** armadillo-co.com; **lamp from Ceramicah** ceramicah.com; **sofa by OR.CA Outdoor; coffee table by Hawk and Stone** hawkandstone.com
91 **Vintage stools from Nulla Club** nulla.club; **ceramics by Amy Dov and Raina J. Lee** amydovstudio.com and rainajlee.com
92 **Vintage stools from Nulla Club; terrazzo countertops and timber cabinets by Responsive Homes; refrigerator from Liebherr** liebherr.com
93 **Bedding from Coyuchi** coyuchi.com; **terrazzo countertops and timber cabinets by Responsive Homes**
95 **Adirondack chairs by OR.CA Outdoor**
96 **Dog bed from Suay** suayla.com; **desk lamp from Ceramicah**
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PHOTO: JAVIER AGUSTÍN ROJAS

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Ashely Kuo: My grandmother owned a few mah-jongg sets, but this purple one was given to me after she passed. My family, and a lot of Asian families, play the game across generations. It's this nice thing that brings people together.

Arianna Deane: Ash has been teaching a lot of friends—myself included—about the game. We see it played a lot around Chinatown in New York, especially in the last couple of years as more people set up tables outside to play, and it's always a very open, fun environment where, as you pass by, you can kind of lean over and see what's going on in the game. It's a nice way to invite people into a culture that might be new or different.

Andrea Chiney: I'll play mah-jongg with my grandparents, who I speak with in Spanish, and even though their Spanish isn't great, sitting down with them around a game helps create a connection. It gives everyone at the table a common footing. It's similar to our studio's work, where we do a lot of community engagement sessions where not everyone speaks the same language. They aren't necessarily based on direct conversation, but rather on activities that involve making things with your hands. Being a design studio of three, we need a fourth to play mah-jongg, and like our workshops, it's about building something.

AK: There's never a hierarchy in the game, which relates to how we approach design projects like healing spaces or outdoor dining areas, or doing research for housing developments. Even though we're the "experts," we want to make sure it's a two-way street and we're learning from communities as much as they're learning from us.

AC: Our work ranges from intimate interiors to shared, urban exteriors. A lot of the topics we address—anger, violence, injustice, healing—are heavy. We don't want to ignore how serious these issues are, but much like gathering around a game of mah-jongg, we want to create a level of comfort that lets people breathe a little bit easier. I just want people to play more mah-jongg. It's something that can keep connecting us to generations past and future, where everyone is welcome. ■

The founders of New York design studio A+A+A use an heirloom mah-jongg set to make room for everyone at the table.

AS TOLD TO
Lauren Gallow

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